manning the barricades

—Peter Steinfels

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UNDERGROUND THEOLOGY

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NEWS AND VIEWS

The National Association for Pastoral Renewal, in a statement signed by 12 of its leading priest and ex-priest members, has welcomed the U.S. Bishops' decision to accept married men for ordination to the diaconate—but with measured enthusiasm. For the Association recognizes that the larger question of married priests is still being ducked.

"No in-depth study was apparently required" to arrive at the decision on married deacons, the Association noted. "Yet when it comes to a question of married priests, we are advised there must be a three-year study before the bishops will even consider the question."

The NAPR statement speaks concern both for priests who have left the ministry to marry and those who wish to leave in order to take on a new mode of Christian existence. The first, the statement holds, should have the option to serve in the diaconate; the second, it says, should have "an honorable and reasonable procedure" open to them by which they might leave the active ministry.

In the latter context, the Association maintains, the bishops should be willing to see that even "professional guidance" is provided departing priests. The request might seem radical, but it is no more than what is available to priests in Britain and France through the hierarchies of those countries.

Last February in London an agency was established with the approval of John Cardinal Heenan of Westminster to assist priests (and nuns) wishing to leave the religious life. Among other things it offers counsel on the kind of job the departing religious seems best qualified for. The agency is headed by an auxiliary bishop of Westminster, Patrick J. Casey.

And a similar office is in the process of being set up by the French bishops.

So there are episcopal precedents, if it is precedents the U.S. bishops would like before acting themselves.

Meanwhile, unofficial groups to assist clergymen in reorienting their lives continue to multiply in the United States. Bearings, the progenitor group in New York, now has branches in several cities; and there is a group in Detroit named Contact; and on the West Coast there is Next Stop. But though most of these groups are up from the underground and able to offer a variety of important services, there is still the problem of the bishops. Until they set up an official office, the return of priests to the lay state will remain a confused and confusing business, scarring to the individual and deluding to the public.

At least one major foundation senses the problem in its human and institutional dimensions, and is quietly exploring what might be done. Its tentative thinking envisions the establishment of a fund to finance training that would relate seminary education and clergy experience to particular secular fields. "The challenge is to preserve priests from all ending up insurancemen," a foundation program planner quipped.

The presumption cannot be automatic, unfortunately, that the foundation will receive the cooperation of the bishops, should it push ahead with a program to assist the occupational and psychological readjustment of priests to the lay life. But its idea has received a generally friendly reception in contacts made to date. This stirs optimism.

•

The Greek Government and Thomas J. Deegan Co., New York public relations firm, have terminated, by mutual consent, their working arrangements.

Deegan had been engaged at $243,000 per annum to represent the Papadopoulos regime "in economic development matters and public education." Which translated meant "to keep the junta's image whitewashed."

Criticism of Deegan for collusion with the repressors of freedom in Greece was widespread—and telling. Deegan initiated termination of contract on April 3 and completed the severance May 10.

A Deegan official described the action as "an internal thing" and declined further comment.

•

Parents who took their 6-to-12-year-olds to Armed Forces Day festivities at Pitman, N.J., found that because of complaints from fussbudgets there wasn't the silhouette of the Viet Cong soldier for the kids to shoot an air rifle at; they had to settle on rubber tires for a target. Not near so much fun.

But there were other joys of war for the kids—like hurling deactivated handgrenades, bayonnetting with padded broomsticks, and a parachute jump from a 16-foot tower.

Rev. Joseph Sweeney of First Baptist Church remained skeptical. "We raised our voices in horror at Hitler's Youth Corps," he sighed, "and look at this."

•

The University of Denver can teach Columbia and others dealing with student demonstrators a slick trick or two.

When 40 students occupied the registrar's office in a campus rights protest, the University summarily expelled the students. Then, having officially rendered them non-students, the University had the forty arrested for being unlawfully on University property. Then the University reinstated the students, pending a decision of the Conduct Review Board.

•

Lovick Pierce, president and publisher of the Methodist Publishing House, has yielded on two points to critics of MPH's employment and accounting policies.

Pierce pledged that MPH will subscribe after all to Project Equality. He also agreed, under pressure from the United Methodist General Conference, to reveal his salary, hitherto one of Methodism's biggest secrets.

The salaries of Methodist bishops, it was noted, have long been a matter of public record. They stand at $17,500, and move on a new sliding scale to $22,000 by 1972.

Pierce's salary is $55,000.

JOHN DEEDY

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CORRESPONDENCE

The King Editorial

Brooklyn, N.Y.

To the Editors: "Dr. King's Legacy" (Apr. 19) is so inconsistent with what I have come to expect from Commonweal, that I first took it to be an exercise in editorial irony. But, finding no internal evidence that the editors dissociate themselves from the views advanced, permit me to honor the editorial by interpreting it at face value.

The editorial treats Dr. King as an ingenuous dreamer, an innocent abroad and befuddled in a complex world he did not understand. There is no recognition of the signal grace-event he was in the tortured configuration of our unhappy moment. With cavalier certainty, altogether disproportionate to the arguments mustered, the editorial dismisses the possibilities of nonviolent revolution. With the keen perception of those who discuss radical ideas in the insularity of white liberalism's safety, the editorial essays an evaluation of Dr. King's impact in the black community. Finally, with the inversed religiosity of the self-consciously liberated Christian, the editorial concludes with a triumphant segregation of the works of God from the efforts of man.

Item: "Reality caught up with Dr. King just as it did with Gandhi." This is an appropriate statement for the pagan who assumes that what has been and is will always be, that history is doomed by the fates to everlasting repetitions of its perversities. But the Christian whose worldview is premised upon the rationality of hope sees that reality has not caught up with King, Gandhi, Jesus or any of the other grace-events in whom the future is signaled and anticipated. In the language of St. Paul, present reality is yearning and groaning in travail toward the fulfillment of that future reality which Dr. King perceived from the mountaintop, the promised land. The crucifixion is not a repudiation of Jesus' message but history's judgment upon the character of our provisional present.

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DROPPING OUT

Shortly after the merger of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations, John L. Lewis, founder of the CIO, noted with accustomed wryness that the new federation was held together by a "rope of sand." From the outset the organization was in many ways admittedly schizophrenic, with the trade unions and the industrial unions never really submerging their differences in the interest of "a greater slice." Not that the differences were marginal to the rest of society either. The conservative AFL unions, which George Meany represents so effectively, adopted the slick public relations of the 1960's but failed to come to terms with their often flagrant discriminatory policies. Among the most influential internationals in the federation are the Building Trades, the exclusionist policies of which have been repeatedly documented; Meany, despite Presidential Executive Orders, court decisions, and pressure from Reuther, withstood all assaults on this bastion of segregation. What must have rankled Reuther was the constant stream of publicity emanating from the *Federationist* calling for a "Negro-Labor coalition" while the AFL-CIO by its own internal policies gave the lie to its own press handouts. In 1955 the House of Labor was probably one of the few institutions in American society that could be counted on for an endorsement of unfulfilled New Deal programs, and in the early years the federation was doubtlessly instrumental in helping to pass significant welfare legislation. But even by 1955 there were unmistakable signs that the old liberalism had become dated, in many instrumental ways reactionary in its staunch support of the status quo. The revelations of Labor-CIA cooperation (in which Reuther's UAW was also implicated) reinforced the conclusion that the House of Labor had become merely an adjunct of the State, its leaders having succeeded in their quest to breakfast with Presidents and convene in the Fontainebleau.

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By 1955 the fathers of Labor had become, indeed, the "new men of power." In the words of C. Wright Mills, the union leaders had learned, even by 1948, to "seek, in the first instance, greater integration at the upper levels of the corporate economy rather than greater power at the lower levels of the work hierarchy, for, in brief, it is the unexpressed desire of American labor leaders to join with owners and managers in running the corporate system and influencing decisively the political economy as a whole." In the process of influencing the political economy as a whole, the federation, which began with an aggregate membership of 16 million, lost members—despite pledges and campaigns repeatedly begun to "organize the unorganized." After 13 years of such pledges only about a quarter of the total non-farm labor force in the U.S. is organized: despite the gallant efforts to fight the "right to work" laws, the AFL-CIO still has yet to grapple with the fact that for the preponderant numbers of the American work force, America remains an open shop. The South still welcomes Northern corporations which flee there for cheap labor: farm workers continue to suffer pitifully low wages in America's factories in the field; ghetto dwellers remain on the lower fringes of a paltry minimum wage. Even more important, America still believes that the unions "have too much power," and is hostile to the idea of industrial democracy —worker influence in the priorities of production and distribution, thanks in part to what has become the apotheosis of Samuel Gompers.

In short, the AFL-CIO buried the idea of social unionism, content with its growing influence at the top. Business unionism (More Now) triumphed as Meany brilliantly outmaneuvered Reuther at every turn. The press, the New York *Times* unexcepted, has chosen to play the UAW breakaway as little more than a personality clash between the two men, and Reuther himself has admittedly helped to emphasize this point by playing on the issue of the AFL's stagnation, rather than on the AFL's philosophy of conservatism and racial discrimination. The issue became for the public one of Reuther's relative lack of influence—something not precisely calculated to reinfuse the labor movement with a sense of purpose.

Walter Reuther is no longer young and fiery—he is in fact only one year younger than John L. Lewis was when he took the United Mine Workers out of the AFL in the Depression. But Reuther is probably the last best hope of the forces of the labor movement concerned with moving labor off dead-center and into the kind of programs that could lead not only to a rejuvenation of the movement as a whole but a new interpretation of what the labor movement is all about. More than half of the members of the AFL-CIO live in suburbs; more than 30 percent of American families are poor, or are only an accident or an illness away from poverty. AFL-CIO press releases have for 13 years been talking about labor's concern for the poor, the oppressed and the blacks. Perhaps the UAW together with whatever other unions also go out of the federation will begin to implement this concern.

COERCED FAMILY PLANNING

Among the more vivid specters haunting the imagination of those opposed to government-sponsored birth control programs has been the possibility of enforced family planning. If governments are allowed to take a hand in such programs, even if initially only for the sake of providing information and assistance, could it not happen that they would eventually become coercive? This question, often asked rhetorically, has been a mainstay among Catholics opposed to federal or state programs. The evidence to support their worries, though, has usually been slight; and there was always the suspicion that it was a concocted worry, a grasping-at-straws to support a "traditional" prohibition of contraception and sterilization.

Unfortunately, it is a specter now becoming concrete in parts of India. Recently, the governments of the states of Mysore and Uttar Pradesh announced that public facilities would henceforth not be available to those having more than three children. As reported in a monthly newsletter published by the Department of Family Planning, Government of India, "Both these states . . . have withdrawn housing benefits, scholarships and medical treatment facilities from those who have more than three children or those [who] already having more than this number have an additional child. . . . Persons who violate the decision will further be barred from [government] land . . . housing facilities . . . and loans for land and housing in low and middle income groups . . ."

The newsletter does not make clear just how consistently and firmly the new policy will be followed. Perhaps exceptions will be made, perhaps not. On the face of it, such a policy would seem bound to fail in many instances; it appears to presuppose the existence of fool-proof contraceptives used in fool-proof ways. Since abortion is illegal on all but medical grounds in India (and presumably in Mysore and Uttar Pradesh as well), the only certain way a family could limit their family size would be by sterilization. In India it is usually the male who is sterilized, by means of a relatively simple vasectomy. In effect then, if we read the (sketchy) reports correctly, the new policy will almost force sterilization upon a large number of married males.

Should one be horrified by this policy? By and large, yes. Those who, through accident or conviction, exceed the prescribed limit might often be those most in need of government help; their families could well be harmed significantly. Those males who feel forced to undergo sterilization would be deprived of an important human right. On two counts, then, the policy is offensive.

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But if a certain horror is a natural reaction, it should probably be tempered with a realization of the desperate plight of India. At present, India's population is estimated to be slightly over 520 million, and is increasing at the rate of about one million a month. For some time now, India's domestic food supply has been inadequate; it is not likely to become adequate in the foreseeable future; a soaring population growth almost guarantees that it will not become adequate. While there has been an active birth control program for some years now in India, it has only made a slight dent in the birth rate. A good program requires a large number of trained personnel, a pervasive interest on the part of the public, a vast number of clinics and centers. On all these counts, India still has a long way to go. Meanwhile, the danger of starvation is everpresent; the life-expectancy of Indians remains low; child mortality rates are high; malnutrition is almost endemic.

In that context, a governmental decision to impose family limitation by harsh measures becomes, if not justifiable, at least understandable. Desperate human situations have long brought forth desperate solutions, sometimes ethical, sometimes not. It may not be edifying, but it seems a historical fact: people do what they have to do in order to survive. More often than not, infanticide, abandonment of the sick and elderly, crude abortions, have represented, not immorality, but an attempt at survival.

The tragedy in the case of India is that it is being driven to the wall by its population growth. Possibly it could do some good to protest the new policy of Mysore and Uttar Pradesh. But it probably wouldn't. More to the point would be a protest against those who would deny India assistance in its voluntary family planning programs, and those who would stint agricultural and economic aid to India.

THE UNDERGROUND

A last-minute insertion into the Boston College meeting on the "underground Church" (three papers from which are reprinted in this issue) was a research report by sociologist Rocco Caporale, S.J., on the proliferation of what he preferred to call "group" churches, not only in the United States but also in Europe and South America. Father Caporale discovered several hundreds of these informally-organized, communal groups all over the U.S., on the East Coast, in Washington, D.C., in St. Louis, Chicago, Seattle, San Diego, Los Angeles and in the San Francisco Bay Area, where, he said, "their number is legion." They were also found in several cities in France (many of them in existence for nearly 15 years), in Spain, Belgium, Holland and Italy, and in Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Chile.

Father Caporale's research indicates that group-church membership tends to be homogeneous and fairly sophisticated. Most are progressive, a few traditionalist. Members are middle-class, college-educated, professional, white men and women between 25 and 45-years-old. (Only in Chile did he find evidence of workers forming such groups.) There is thus a danger of affluent introversion, but in San Francisco many of the groups are cross-denominational, the members coming together originally out of a common interest in the peace movement, civil rights and reform politics, rather than a simple desire to form an intimate community of worship.

Father Caporale's research, in revealing that the "underground church" is international, puts the phenomenon into a wider perspective. It suggests for one thing that the "underground church" is not the work of a few isolated malcontents but a genuine grass-roots movement with a mixture of threat and promise to the whole Church. It should be taken more seriously than it has been.

SEE THE POOR

In a country as rich as the United States, the spectacle of thousands of poor people converging on the nation's capital is bound to irritate those Congressmen intent on slashing social service budgets. They are usually able to do so undistracted by the presence of their slashes' victims. One of the purposes of the Poor People's Campaign, then, is to make Washington's lawmakers *see* the poor, to make disturbingly visible the men, women and children who have no share in America's affluence but who, most of the time, remain conveniently invisible.

As the campaign moves into final confrontation in Washington, reactions to the passage of the caravans through the various sections of the country have been mixed. One poor white from Mississippi, interviewed on television, sneered at the mule train: "They're making monkeys out of themselves." In some places, crowds turned out to stare at the incoming caravans as if at

NEXT WEEK

ROBERT ZOELLNER assays the swinging generation from the far side of 30:

"Because those under 30 have so obviously rejected our morality, we are resentfully inclined to call them immoral. But my experience on campus suggests that 'immoral' does not fit the case. Neither does 'amoral,' or any other traditional term. Rather, I would call them *premoral*, which I would define as the quality of being morally concerned and morally aware, without necessarily being committed to a particular morality."

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the arrival of a circus. In other towns and cities, however, anticipation of the caravans galvanized local citizens' and church groups into banding together to provide food and housing, to offer welcome and encouragement, to show their support. No doubt many of these emergency groups fell apart after the poor left, but some show promise of continuing as community action groups exerting their influence on behalf of the poor in jobs, housing, education and welfare.

Another reaction all along the line, but especially in Washington, has been the middle classes' uneasiness before the indifferent planning and rather haphazard organization of the march. Yet it is precisely here, in its confusion and inefficiency, its generally hand-to-mouth character, that the Campaign will indirectly reveal to the rest of America the reality of being poor.

First of all, there has been, generally, a shortage of food, but hunger is no stranger to the poor. In some parts of this country people are starving: let Washington see that, and the rest of the nation as well. Then, in Resurrection City, the building of plywood dwellings, showers and toilets was stalled because of lack of money. The resultant overcrowding and the health hazard attendant upon poor sanitation are worrying observers, but they probably do not seem too unusual to the poor. Most of them have never known adequate housing and their health is a matter of luck, sometimes good, sometimes bad, always precarious.

Another thing that is becoming visible by the Poor People's Campaign is the tensions among the poor, the fear and distrust that have kept them divided: poor blacks against poor whites, poor Mexicans or Puerto Ricans against whites and blacks, the militant young from the cities against the quieter country people.

Thus, the whole spectrum of poverty in America is on view in Washington. So far the Poor People's Campaign has been peaceable, but as the riots in nearby Maryland showed, violence is never far away nowadays. Americans had better take a good look at their poor while there is still time.

MANNING THE PARIS BARRICADES

PETER STEINFELS

Not since 1934, when the fascist leagues and the Action Française tried to storm the National Assembly, had Paris seen anything like this. Not even during the days of Algeria. May 10, 1968, at 9:15 p.m., the first barricade went up, rue Le Goff, around the corner from my apartment. Anywhere from 30 to 40 thousand students, prevented from continuing their march across the Seine, had completely surrounded the Latin Quarter, surrounding as well the police and the *gardes mobiles* who had been sealing off the Quarter nightly for a week. For five furious hours, while student leaders and Ministers and Rectors and Deans fruitlessly attempted the barest of negotiations, the students lined up cars, carried wood from construction sites, dug up the grapefruit-size *pavés* of which Paris streets are made, and built over 50 barricades facing the lines of police. The one I saw on rue St. Jacques was 10 feet high and flew a red flag. "I have never seen anything like this," declared one radio reporter. "Only in pictures of the Revolution of 1848!" At 2:30, the fighting began.

While Parisians gaped the next morning at the burnt-out cadavers of automobiles lining the torn-up streets, an American could not help but think of Detroit or Newark —and be amazed at the small amount of damage here. Relatively few windows were broken in storefronts. Fire touched almost no buildings. There was no looting. This was a different sort of riot, and to understand its human meaning, one almost had to begin by considering its strategic procedures.

For months, the French government had been giving student agitators a more or less free hand. But events at Nanterre, a branch of the University of Paris, had escalated to the point where classes were suspended; and, perhaps worried about the atmosphere for the Vietnam conversations, the government evidently decided it was time for a show of force. On Friday, May 3, the police were called into the Sorbonne to halt a demonstration, not only transgressing sacred territory by entering the university but adding the usual dose of brutality to their performance. Three days later, on Monday, May 6, the police charged a student march which was protesting the earlier police action. If the ghetto uprisings in America seem directed against the very physical structures of the ghetto while the police are to be avoided if possible, the students' intentions here were to confront, politically and physically, the forces of "law and order" and not to avoid them. What, a month before, had been largely the affair of exotic far-left groups making frequently obscure demands at one university branch well outside Paris, now became a struggle whose aims thousands of students could understand: amnesty for our comrades, reopening of the Sorbonne, removal of the contingents of police and *gardes mobiles* from "our quarter."

On Friday the 3rd, groups of students had responded to the police action at the Sorbonne by stopping traffic, taunting the police, and infrequently tossing a stone. In turn, the police would charge, well-protected with helmets and large plastic shields, well armed with hard rub-

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ber clubs. The students fled. Although there were a few serious skirmishes late that night, when I walked through the crowds in the evening, the prevailing mood was strictly picnic.

Monday the 6th was a different story. All morning the massive presence of the police in the Quarter served as an effective recruiting device for the student march, which finally confronted a police line in the afternoon. Once again, the police needlessly took the offensive, and this time, after the first charge, the students held their ground, constructed a light barricade to slow the police advance, and discovered the *pavés* as ammunition. But clouds and clouds of tear gas finally forced the march to disperse, which meant an ugly evening of attacks and counterattacks between police units and groups of students, and, often enough, unprovoked charges by the police who beat anyone within reach.

Tuesday, the students marched again, now 15,000 strong. The police walled off the Latin Quarter, so the demonstrators went toward the Right Bank, marched up and down the Champs Elysées, and late at night recrossed the Seine and headed once more toward the Latin Quarter. A clash was inevitable. The police were determined to block off the Quarter; the student leaders could not send home their troops without a confrontation.

In an effort to get ahead of the student line of march, I suddenly found myself in the midst of the police preparations to stop the march. A sort of panzer division of police vans had suddenly roared down the street and disgorged hundreds of well-armed troops. A few blocks away the French Red Cross set up camp. Save for motorcycle helmets in the front line, the student army was wonderfully nineteenth century, marching under ragged red flags, seized tricolors minus the blue and white sections, and armed, when armed at all, with clubs made from tree branches. This was a well-disciplined nineteenth century, however, and it set to work building light barricades and digging up *pavés* as though these were inherited skills. But the twentieth century has tear gas and gas masks and ultimately the nineteenth century must double-up or run, which fact it knew quite well and which lent its hour of resistance an air of pathetic bravery.

Wednesday and Thursday were relatively quiet, on account of rain and in expectation of Friday. The police invested the Quarter each night. Stories of brutality circulated. One doctor (giving his name and stating his willingness to testify in court) reported to *Le Monde* a police attack on the customers of a perfectly quiet cafe; one Black was led to a police van in good health; ten minutes later, an ambulance arrived and took him away on a stretcher.

But Friday's encirclement of the Latin Quarter was not really planned. It emerged as a tactic after the police had prevented the students' earlier plans. In a sense, it was entirely defensive in character. The student leaders promised to disperse the demonstration if the government could come through with any sort of commitment to free the jailed "comrades." The students' own *service d'ordre* was almost completely successful in preventing hotheads from launching stones at the police lines, despite hours of tension when all the demonstrators could hear on their transistors the government's refusal to do anything but repeat its past platitudes.

Yet now the government's inability to act had turned against it. The students could merely stay put, and had the stalemate continued, Saturday morning would have seen them in charge of a section of Paris—and free to demonstrate elsewhere while the huge numbers of *gardes mobiles* and riot-police were barricaded inside the Latin Quarter. Finally, the police were obliged to accept the burden of opening hostilities. At 2:30 a.m. they laid down a barrage of tear gas and tried to advance over the barricades. On the blvd. Gay Lussac, close to our apartment, it took the government forces several hours to clear a few blocks. The students set their barricades afire to slow down the police advance, although the radio reported that the police, too, fired the barricades, either on purpose or indirectly through the mechanism of their tear gas grenades. The entire neighborhood was filled with gas. When occupants of apartments overlooking the fighting opened their windows to throw water to the students (to help them breathe) the police fired tear gas grenades directly into the apartments.

Sympathies Shift

The attitude of the neighborhood was extremely interesting. Numerous people I questioned were either negative toward the students or thought the demonstrations had become "crazy." But their detestation for the "forces of order" ran even deeper. When the confrontation finally arrived, sympathies were with the students. During the hours of waiting and building barricades, neighborhood people threw down food from their balconies or placed their radios outside so that the demonstrators could follow the news of negotiations.

After the fighting began, inhabitants of the Quarter frequently sheltered the fleeing or wounded. I had always known of the veritable ideology of anti-*flic*ism in France, but now I thoroughly understood and felt it myself. An old woman in the neighborhood who opened her door to escaping students was beaten by the police charging in after them. There were numerous reports, on the radio and in *Le Monde*, of police attacking Red Cross stations, beating the personnel, and even seizing wounded right off the stretchers!

The students escaped any way they could. A student in the building next to ours sheltered several who had climbed over roofs to reach a point of safety. Fifteen hundred holed up in the Ecole Normale Supérieure and began to plan a staircase-by-staircase defense which was

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happily avoided only when some authority refused the police permission to enter. At 5:30 in the morning, the police cleared the last pocket of resistance.

For the government, the riot had the aspect of the gods' retribution. A decade of Gaullism had just been crowned with the diplomatic triumph of the Vietnam peace conversations. All week long, while Prime Minister Pompidou visited Iran and Afghanistan, making statements about France's place in the world, officials at home congratulated themselves with phrases about Paris, "the city of peace," and continued to minimize the extent of the unrest. The Minister of Education spoke complacently of a few extremist troublemakers and declared the demonstrations nothing compared to those of Berlin or Warsaw. At the very moment, 15,000 marchers were in the street!

The Communist Party made a similar error. For months it had been bitterly denouncing the Maoist, Castroite or anarchist student groups and refused to let them participate in May Day demonstrations. The favorite term of Communist contempt has been "groupuscule"—tiny group—which is probably accurate enough. But the Party managed to convince itself that these groups had no resonance with the general student population; and it had to backtrack quickly after thousands of students marched the streets, chanting in derision, "We are a *groupuscule*!" The Communist labor organization, the C.G.T., along with other labor groups, finally declared a general strike and demonstration for Monday, May 13. But even this maneuver led to the painful necessity of participating with student leaders like anarchist Daniel Cohn-Bendit whom the Communists were denouncing as "adventurers" only a week earlier.

In the meantime, of course, Prime Minister Pompidou had dashed in from the wings and, at least for the moment, defused matters by largely conceding the students their three demands. The temperature in the Latin Quarter dropped as soon as the police left. Which, as much as anything else, demonstrated how unfortunate had been the policy of a "show of force."

Naturally, numerous American students could not miss participating in this marvelous Berkeley away from home. For some, though, it was a risky game. One military deserter, for example, was present in the initial Sorbonne demonstration when the police arrived and began making arrests. He was saved from probable expulsion from France only by the philosopher Paul Ricoeur who handed him a briefcase and led him through several police lines as "my assistant." Another deserter, arrested in the course of the demonstrations, promptly protested that he was an American tourist and wanted to be taken to the Embassy. The bluff was successful. The police released him at once. One can only speculate on what might have occurred had he been taken to the Embassy!

It is hard to estimate the deeper meaning of the French events. De Gaulle's regime has suffered a setback on its tenth birthday; the riots cracked precisely that image of stability and good order which so many Frenchmen have associated with the Fifth Republic. Add to that the ministerial bungling and a rather shocking censorship of news coverage on the state radio and TV. Pompidou's swift action after his return saved a few marbles. But *Le Canard Enchainé's* headline summed up the general picture with a pun: *Le gouvernement a perdu ses Facultes.*

Score a few points for the opposition, then. The real mystery remains: the students. No doubt they are unhappy with their university, still an institution whose authoritarian structures, teaching methods and spirit are oriented more toward preserving and refining a body of traditional "culture" than toward exploration, discovery or intellectual fulfillment on a democratic scale. And no doubt being at the receiving end of a police *matraque* has helped radicalize many students in the past few days. That has been known to happen in the U.S.

What can one make of the revolutionary "groupuscules" who will profit from the demonstrations? Certainly it is refreshing to see the black anarchist flag flying or to savor the bravura of a poster on a Sorbonne wall:

"The revolution which is beginning will challenge not only capitalist society but industrial civilization.

"The consumer society must die a violent death.

"The society of alienation must disappear from history. We will invent a new and original world.

"Let the imagination rule!"

But the history of movements with such infinite ambitions and absolute faith is all too well known and all too unhappy. Does the reappearance of those nineteenth-century barricades only presage more nineteenth-century politics for France? Already certain "groupuscules" have manifested a remarkable capacity for fanaticism, vague oratory, nihilistic tactics of disruption, and no great bent for specific analyses.

At least two realities, however, firmly ground the "groupuscules' " ability to seize center-stage morally. The first is the fact that most of the proposals for reform or "modernization" of the French university are finally intended only to make higher education a more efficient, a more "productive" factor in a mass-consumption, neo-capitalist society. On the contrary, the students demand a "critical university" which would permanently represent the forces of contestation in society rather than the techniques of manipulation. The second reality is simply the existence of the turbulent world of developing nations, which challenges the legitimacy of a society enjoying its own benefits while most men slip into greater and greater misery. This is the moral half-nelson which the "groupuscules" will continue to hold on the affluent society.

And not only in France.

(Peter Steinfels is an Associate Editor of Commonweal *presently writing from France.)*

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FOREIGN AFFAIRS

PARADOX OF POWER

Columbia University's rebel students, like the Viet Cong, have dramatically demonstrated how powerless established power can be. The power of a university, as of a nation, may prove empty when it is confronted with a mode of resistance to which it has no appropriate response. The lesson is imposing. It may be liberating; it may also be sanguine in its implications.

Do your worst, the students invited. The university eventually did. It called in the police. Its "bankruptcy," its ultimate reliance on coercion by the state, was "unmasked." The mass of students were impelled toward "radicalization." The struggle was polarized, made extreme; compromise was discredited. The process at Columbia paralleled what was happening, or was about to happen, in Germany and France. Established authority is driven by violence into repressive action, and that, then, decisively strengthens student rebellions which, had they been self-restrained, "reasonable," would have been ineffective. Illegal action—violence—shows its ability not merely to conquer but to discredit legality.

But of course Columbia University and the City of New York—and French and West German authorities—did not really do the worst that could have been done. It was the worst that universities and the civil power *were willing* to do. The universities and civil authorities did not want to crush the rebel students or uncompromisingly enforce the law—and "the system." They valued and respected the students, however enraged or despairing they also felt. They sought a restoration of dialogue, of compromise, a return to legal forms of action. They sought restoration of exactly those conventions, that system—complacent, self-indulgent, no doubt deaf to reform—which the students, provisionally, repudiated. Yet, and this seems an important point, not even the majority of activist students would hold that the system, the university system or civil authority, really deserves wholesale condemnation. These are not evil, "rotten," narrowly exploitative institutions. They are quite decent institutions, served by honest men, incorporating values crucial to modern historical experience and political liberty.

The more imposing, and ruthless, version of the lesson has already been enforced by the Viet Cong. Again violence—and in this case terrorism, extortion and murder—has shown up the limits of the power it defies. And again this is possible because of the self-restraint of the users of that power. The remark now is common that the United States cannot win in Vietnam without destroying Vietnamese society. Precisely: but it is within the power of the United States to destroy that society if that in fact proves indispensable to victory and *if the United States chooses to do so*. We do not do it because we are unwilling. Even the expedients we have already employed—bombing the North, an indulgence of terrorism and torture on our side, the use of gas and defoliants—have so drastically disturbed American opinion and the American conscience that support for the war has been shattered.

Order—the *status quo*, which is a very mixed lot of things—is sustained by a consensus of beliefs and by a myth of force. That myth now is being discredited. The threat of force, of the power which actually is at the disposal of the agents of order, is shown, in the event, to be unenforceable. The inhibition on the use of power may simply be decency, or a practical understanding of the fact that values actually shared by the combatants will be destroyed by force. Or the inhibition may be a moral restraint of the kind which has functioned in American policymaking and among the American public on the issue of Vietnam. There may also be inhibitions imposed by expedience: even if the United States had no moral cause to restrain its actions in Vietnam it may be that the measures indispensable to success simply are impractical, "contraproductive." One tires of killing, but one also pays for killing. "Success" may be rendered meaningless. Similarly, a student rebellion can be crushed, the protesting students jailed or expelled, the rest disciplined, but what is left is the wreckage of a university.

The new style of rebellion—whether it is a university protest or a civil uprising and war—functions by posing for the more powerful opponent the problem of "destroying this town in order to save it." It is, interestingly enough, a translation of the nuclear dilemma: power which has utility only so long as it is not used. The new exploitation of this paradox of power in political war and civil struggle no doubt owes a good deal to the world's 20-year experience of the atomic age. When force becomes disproportionately great it loses its utility.

For conservatives, the established men of society and state, the men of *status quo,* but also for men who fear the chaos which civilization narrowly averts, all of this must seem ominous. The conventions of society's political organization are more fragile than militants may be willing to acknowledge. For the exploited, the persecuted, for the romantic, the restless, the visionaries, the ambitious, it is hope and opportunity—but for what?

I do not myself know whether it is good or bad that Americans have suddenly stumbled onto this discovery of how powerless power can be. It is, however, a condition of contemporary politics, and the practice of this discovery could prove the most important political innovation of our time.

WILLIAM PFAFF

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UNDERGROUND THEOLOGY

The articles following, by Mary Daly, Rosemary Ruether and George Hafner, were originally given as talks at Boston College in April at the Institute on Church Renewal and Intra-Church Conflict, a conference on the "Underground Church," as the press reported it. They are reprinted here with the permission of the College and the authors.

Mary Daly teaches theology at Boston College and is the author of the recently published book, The Church and the Second Sex *(Harper and Row). In her article, Dr. Daly borrows substantially from an essay she contributed to the book,* Demands for Christian Renewal *(Maryknoll Publications), also recently published.*

Rosemary Ruether teaches at Howard University in Washington, D.C., is the author of The Church Against Itself *(Herder and Herder) and has contributed to a variety of popular and scholarly journals.*

Father George Hafner is a member of an experimental parish in the Trenton, N.J., area and was one of the participants in Commonweal's *recent symposium on "The Troubled Priest."*

THE EDITORS

DISPENSING WITH TRIVIA

MARY DALY

Is it possible to take theology seriously in the seventh decade of the twentieth century? Many of our contemporaries think it is not and some of us may at times be tempted to agree with them. In any case, there are radical problems which must be faced if there is to be a realistic appraisal of theology in our time.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, writing in prison in 1944, just a few months before he was hanged by the Nazis, anticipated the mood of our present decade when he wrote that now famous sentence: "The attack by Christian apologetic upon the adulthood of the world I consider to be in the first place pointless, in the second ignoble, and in the third un-Christian." Bonhoeffer saw that in "a world come of age" much of traditional Christian theology and preaching operates as an attempt to put a grown-up man back into adolescence, that is, to make him depend upon things he isn't dependent upon any more, and to thrust him back into problems which he has long since overcome. He called Christian apologetic ignoble, because it often amounts to an effort to exploit the weakness of man for purposes alien to him. He called it un-Christian, "because for Christ himself is being substituted one particular stage in the religiousness of man, i.e., a human law." Bonhoeffer saw that man in a world come of age can cope with all questions of importance without recourse to God as a working hypothesis, whether in morals, politics or science.

Bonhoeffer was, of course, not the first to point to the irrelevance of religion for modern man. For many years it had been axiomatic among Marxists that "religion is the opiate of the people." And Nietzsche had announced through the character of "the madman" that God is dead. "What are these churches now," cried the madman, "if they are not the tombs and sepulchers of God?" But the madman also said, "I come too early, my time has not come yet." What has happened in our time is that Christian theologians have begun to announce their agreement with Nietzsche's madman, not merely in hushed whispers, but in shouts from the house-tops. In the 1960's the "death-of-God" movement in theology has come into its own, proclaiming a Gospel of Christian atheism.

"Christian atheism" might seem to many a contradiction in terms. Such a judgment is not entirely justified. Since none of our images or concepts are adequate to express the reality of God, Gabriel Marcel rightly concludes that "when we speak about God, it is not God we speak of." This has always been true; it is the human situation. Thomas Aquinas recognized it when he wrote that "we cannot know what God is, but rather what He is not." (This did not prevent Thomas from writing volumes about God, but his declaration of theological limitation still stands.)

It would be unrealistic, however, to conclude that there is no special problem in our time. We have reached a new stage in the evolution of human consciousness, a stage which Bonhoeffer attempted to describe by the expression "world come of age." Something has happened in the consciousness of contemporary man. Informed and

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conditioned by modern science and technology and by the resultant social and political developments, this consciousness can no longer accept many of the doctrines of Christianity as they are presented. Thought patterns have changed. Increasing numbers of Christians are becoming alienated from their former beliefs, convinced that intellectual honesty and emotional maturity require a wholesale rejection of the faith of their childhood.

It will be noted that no distinction has been made here between Catholic and Protestant Christians. Although the radical theologians identified with the "death of God" movement are all Protestants, the general cultural climate that produced the phenomenon permeates the whole of Western civilization. The radical transformations now taking place in human consciousness cannot be reduced to denominational categories. Mankind has moved into an age which can truly be called post-Christendom. What is at stake cannot be expressed in terms of the language and style of the liturgy, the length of nuns' habits, clerical celibacy, the number of sacraments, or birth control—although these all point to deeper questions. What is at stake is the future of faith itself. In the age of the "death of God" the traditional categories of Christian belief and the institutional structures have become meaningless or at least irrelevant to most people.

Specifically, if one considers Christians brought up within the Catholic tradition, it is evident that the walls of the cultural ghetto which once protected us from the effects of contemporary thought and life have crumbled. Many American Catholics cling to the "answers" programmed into them during their years of Catholic schooling, but an increasing number of the younger and better educated are undergoing the painful process of liberation. Many who were excited and challenged by the liberal views of a Hans Küng five years ago now find that their own questions are far more radical than those he raises and attempts to answer. In some cases the result is serious reading and study of religious questions. More frequently, there is simply a split-level existence—mouthing empty formulae and following some of the rules. The college student who attends Mass on Sunday when at home, to avoid hurting his parents, is typical.

In an era like ours, then, it is hardly possible to speak of Christian theology as if the frame of reference were similar to that of another generation. We are burdened with the knowledge of the moral failure of institutional Christianity. The failure of the Church in Nazi Germany, the failure of the Church in America to condemn the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, and the war in Vietnam, and its refusal to demonstrate its verbal support of civil rights, are too evident to be ignored. The Christian who faces these things—especially one who identifies with institutional Catholicism—is torn and divided within himself. He feels that he is within the Church and yet in isolation, closer to his agnostic friends than to many "fellow Catholics." He has difficulty understanding those who still speak of "making converts." Seeing the condition of the Church in the twentieth century, he realizes that the appropriate attitude is one of commitment to improving the lot of the oppressed, the despised and the disadvantaged. Only thus can the Church which preaches charity hope to regain some of its credibility.

Doctrinal Underdevelopment

We are faced not only with the moral feebleness of institutional Christianity but also with doctrinal underdevelopment. These weaknesses are closely interrelated. The same vested institutional interests that have inhibited ecclesiastical leaders from speaking and acting courageously in regard to social problems have also prompted them to discourage free intellectual inquiry. The progressive theologians whose labors bore fruit at Vatican II had to overcome great handicaps, which have not yet disappeared entirely. Charles Davis was not expressing feelings peculiar only to himself when he said, in explaining his separation from the Catholic Church: "I have had to move a mountain of ecclesiastical rubble to produce a few tiny plants of creative thought." He was expressing the thought of many theologians and scholars when he wrote: "The lack of concern for truth, with the subordination of truth to authority and to the preservation of the system, pervades the whole institution." Much that is written, taught, and preached within this institution reflects the lack of concern for truth of which Davis spoke. Moreover, one often has the impression that the more official is the source and/or occasion of a doctrinal statement, the lower is its degree of credibility.

Just as the only worthy response to a personal realization of the Church's failure in charity and justice is commitment to charity and justice, so the only fitting reaction to the Church's suppression of truth is commitment to truth. At this point in history, the ways in which a Christian can express his commitment to truth will be radically different from the ways of another generation. It is a time for listening and for dialogue, and above all for the abandonment of pretense. In an age of dramatic change, in which all can sense the atmosphere of expectation, of not knowing what is beyond the horizon, there simply is no place for the pompous claims that have become synonymous in the popular mind with "Christian doctrine."

To achieve the desired dialogue we will have to overcome certain built-in obstacles which are the effects of the underdevelopment of Catholic doctrine and which haunt the minds of many—literally of millions—who have been conditioned by Catholic education and preaching. There are, first of all, distorted notions of faith. As Paul Tillich pointed out: "Today the term 'faith' is more productive of disease than of health." In fact, the term is so loaded with unhealthy associations that it would be well to do away with the word, if that were possible. However,

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Tillich recognized that a powerful tradition protects it. Therefore, it is essential to purify and reinterpret the word, removing the misleading connotations.

One of the most prevalent distortions is the notion of faith as an act of knowledge with a low degree of evidence. Actually, this is a description of belief, rather than faith, and it leads to the idea that an "act of the will" is necessary to make up for the lack of evidence for what one affirms as true. Thus, one wills or decides to believe certain propositions proposed by the Church as being "divinely revealed." It is precisely this notion which underlies the indoctrination from which Catholics have suffered. What it means is that one unquestioningly accepts as true certain formulae, on the assumption that if they are questioned or doubted, faith is lost and serious sin is committed. It means that the "believer" gives assent to his own brainwashing, to spiritual mutilation. It is the very opposite of that "faith which seeks understanding" which has driven the saints and mystics toward transcendence. This soul-shrinking conception of faith is welcomed by some as a simple escape from responsibility and from the questions urged upon them by reality. However, ever greater numbers are finding it a crippling hindrance to self-realization, to communication, and to action.

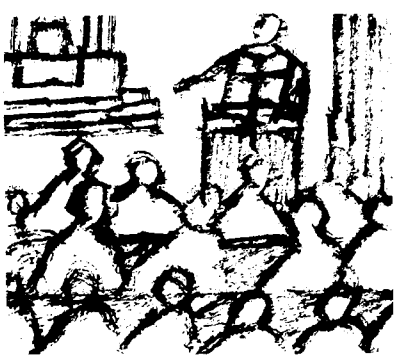
Far truer to the experience of religious consciousness is Tillich's description of faith as "the state of being ultimately concerned." This indicates that what is being expressed is an atitude of the whole existing person, an attitude of seeking—and therefore of loving—God with the whole mind, heart and soul. Faith in this sense involves risk and doubt. It is forever driving beyond itself and therefore recognizes the inadequacy of every formulation. This is not to say that it refuses to see the need for creeds and formulae, but it does recognize the need for continual criticism of them.

All of this is becoming evident to young people who have grown up in the "secular city" and who therefore have too great a sense of relativity and of irony to see themselves as bringing a basket of religious truths to another, who is supposedly in the dark. Unlike their forebears, they are intellectually sophisticated enough to know that it is they who are in the dark. Scandalized by the Church, or—having gone beyond that—apathetic, they recognize in themselves the "foreigner," the outsider. They are beginning to recognize the shallowness of every vision of Christianity which reduces one's option to "in" or "out," "loss of faith" as a consequence of intellectual honesty. One cannot "lose one's faith" by being true to one's own mind: honesty and courage are demanded by faith itself, no matter where it may lead, even to the apparent negation of faith.

Purification of conceptions of faith leads inexorably to confrontation with shallow conceptualizations of God. It is fascinating how discussions of many apparently more relevant and practical issues in the post-Vatican II years have served as so many diverse routes to the same radical source. Of what use is it to talk about updating the Church when the haunting question of God's existence is not faced? More important than the "answers" we may give to this question is the fact of having faced it. In the light of that question, all of our "us and them" categories can be seen as the pitiful defenses they are. As the French philosopher Jean Lacroix said: "It is difficult and perhaps impossible to speak about atheism without hypocrisy. . . . To condemn it right away, or refute it, is to present yourself implicitly as a believer; to suggest to your readers or hearers that unbelief is entirely foreign to you, is pure pharisaism."

To imagine that we grasp God in our words and concepts is sheer foolishness. That is not to deny the possibility of analogy, nor to deny that our words and the images and concepts which they represent can point toward God. Yet God himself—Being itself—is unfathomable abyss.

Although our conceptions of God are all inadequate, experience has revealed that some conceptions are so inadequate as to be misleading and harmful. Particularly devastating has been the image of God as a kind of tyrant—a projection of the father-image in patriarchal society—imposing his inscrutable plan upon man. When this image is reinforced by the affirmation that the divine attributes include omnipotence and immutability, the notion comes through of a "supreme being" whose very



existence paralyzes man's will to transcendence. Before such a God, man is reduced to psychic infantilism. He is less than a man.

It is true, of course, that conceptualizations about God in scholastic theology are far subtler than this, that there are strong counterbalancing elements, not least of which are the insistence that God is all-loving and that man has free will. But, the fact remains that, as John Stuart Mill pointed out, man has been unable to reconcile the notion of an infinitely loving, infinitely powerful God with the existence of evil. The scholastic subtleties, however logical they may have seemed to theologians, have not been psychologically meaningful. Christian theology developed in such a way that the reaction of modern atheism was inevitable. It has appeared to countless in-

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telligent persons that the "God of theism" has to be proclaimed dead if man is to live in freedom.

Another tendency intimately bound up with shallow theism is an all-too-prevalent way of using "divine providence." Particularly harmful are attempts to use "God" to perpetuate conditions which the preacher, or teacher, may find convenient, but which may be destructive of persons. One encounters this phenomenon with alarming frequency: it reveals itself especially in such expressions as "the divine plan" and "God's will." What is urgently called for is renunciation of all pretensions to having a direct "hot line" to the "divine plan," and especially of all efforts to enhance one's views by dubbing them "God's plan." There should be a radical rejection of every temptation to glorify and perpetuate culturally-conditioned situations and roles, under the pretense that "it is God's will"—a gimmick that has been used by the pious and complacent in the face of all forms of oppression. It has been used by Christian theologians to hold down slaves, women, peasants, the working class, Negroes, the poor—all minority groups. There is some justice in the accusation that the Church has worked against human evolution, that it has been, particularly in recent centuries, the enemy of human progress. It is still haunted by an ideology which has regressive elements, which lends support to caste systems, which justifies the mechanisms of those in power. If the Christian community is to become, as Harvey Cox suggests, "God's avant-garde," then it must set to work to cleanse its own doctrine.

A Glimpse of the Future

All of this suggests that there must be a convergence of the theological underground with the Church-renewal underground and the ethical-witness underground (which William Hamilton has described as the three as yet unconnected portions of the religious underground today). The schism many have feared within Catholicism already exists, but it is less visible and more subtle than may have been expected. The ancient outward forms persist, but there is a great divergence among those perceiving them; the fundamental split is between those who have turned toward the future and those who seek refuge in the past. The future-oriented do not feel that all is lost, but rather that everything is to be gained. To reject idolatrous faith is not to reject faith. To repudiate a clerical caste is not to reject Christian ministry, but only one of its alienating forms.

We certainly have no precise blueprints of the forms the church will take in the years ahead, but we can catch a glimpse of the future. Teilhard de Chardin bequeathed to us a most important insight when he suggested that the world has recently entered upon the Age of the Noosphere. He thought of the Noosphere as a membrane of heightened awareness encircling our planet: "All around us, tangibly and materially, the thinking envelope of the Earth—the Noosphere—is adding to its internal fibers and tightening its network; and at the same time its internal temperature is rising, and with this its psychic potential." In line with Teilhard's insight, is it not conceivable that the Church in the future may be realized chiefly as a network of communication over the face of the earth?

If this prognostication is correct, what message will theologians born in the age of electronic technology bring to the expanding collective consciousness? The essential themes of that message are to be found in our Christian heritage, and they correspond amazingly to the central preoccupations of the most prophetic of contemporary thinkers. What are these basic themes? First, we have received from our heritage a sense of vocation, of a call from the depths which propels us beyond our present level of existence and gives a dimension of transcendence to our activities. This is simply another way of expressing "the first and greatest commandment." The second theme is that the quality of our actions is measured according to the level of commitment to persons which they express. This is another way of stating the second great commandment.

Well, then, should the theology emerging from the religious underground be called evolutionary or revolutionary? The question itself poses a false dichotomy, since the evolution of theology can be seen as a dialectical movement involving revolutionary upheavals. It is important to recognize this, and to abandon all attempts to create illusions of false continuity with the past. For example, the surfacing of the theological underground involves a clean rejection of phrases such as "papal infallibility," while attempting to change the meaning of the terms. It implies, too, an honest recognition that the basic elements of the Christian message are often better understood and applied by those who have rejected the institutional Church than by those who still identify with it. Those who are in contact with the younger generation can see many indications that this will be even truer in the future, since many of the most gifted and idealistic young people are simply dropping out of the institution.

The emergence of the theological underground means rejection of the old obsessions with labels, such as "Catholic," "non-Catholic," "Christian," "non-Christian" and the focusing of attention upon what people are actually saying and doing. We can recognize that the deepest realities conveyed in Christian theology are present also in the consciousness of many who do not call themselves Christians, but who have the same flame of expectation burning within them, the same passion for transcendence and desire for justice. The theology growing out of the underground church finds it necessary to dispense with trivia and to focus on what really matters—the striving toward a higher level of human existence and toward the hidden but living God.

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SCHISM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

ROSEMARY RUETHER

In the euphoria of the Second Vatican Council, it appeared that the Roman Catholic Church was accomplishing what historical experience and the laws of institutions would seem to rule out as impossible; namely, an established and highly bureaucratic institution revolutionizing itself through the channels of constituted authority. It appeared that, after centuries of inbred fear and stagnation, a renewal was taking place that was to catapult the Roman Catholic Church into dialogue with "modern times." There was to be balanced assimilation of the best of contemporary thought, but without schism or breaking of ranks on any side.

But as the impact of the Council has had an opportunity to develop, and many of the theories of the Council, enunciated with such calm assurance at that time, are in process of being lived out, this optimistic judgment is by no means so certain. We find that it is one thing to define a noble theory of collegiality on all levels of the church, and quite another to seek to put it into practice when this means a concrete challenge to the power structures which have hitherto prevailed. We find that it is one thing to outline an inspiring concept of the liturgy as the celebration of community, but quite another to scrutinize the present life of the parish in the light of these ideals.

The extraordinary aspect of the Council is that the bishops, led on by theological *periti* who often delicately underplayed the revolutionary possibilities of what they were saying, allowed themselves to say far more than they had intended to say. In so doing, they seemed oblivious to the changed situation in the church created by mass media of communication (as their decree on this subject so amply demonstrated). They still assumed that the implications of what they were saying could be worked out in secret, high level meetings, and then passed down to the "listening church" through regular ecclesiastical channels exactly as though there were no television or world press at work already interpreting what they were saying to the world.

It did not seem to occur to the bishops that Catholics, in great numbers, all over the world would be reading and interpreting for themselves all these ideas without waiting for official guidelines; that Catholics all over the world, reading the decrees on the liturgy, on the meaning of the church, on the need to modernize the religious orders, would take all this quite literally, would believe exactly what they read and would proceed to act upon these things as though they themselves were the church.

Thus it came about that a revolution begun by a Pope rapidly got out of hierarchical hands altogether and became a popular movement, and the bishops found themselves in the strange position of being picketed in their chanceries by people carrying signs covered with words from conciliar decrees and papal encyclicals.

But this revolution in mass communication which suddenly revealed another and very different kind of teaching authority in the church is only a part of the situation that has brought about our present tensions. This would mean little without the total historical context in which it operated. Culturally speaking, the conciliar decrees tried to span an abyss created by all the revolutions in thought and society from the Latin Middle Ages to the twentieth century with one magic thread of the development of doctrine.

The span of thought between Trent and Vatican II was, in fact, far too great to be so easily assimilated. History is not cheated. One cannot retreat before historical development for five centuries and then expect to take it all in with a three-year cram course. Much blood has flowed under the bridge in that time (to quote a line from "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf"). A revolution in consciousness has taken place which assumes an autonomy, secularity, historicity and a democratic structure of society. None of this did the Roman Church gather to itself during that long period of crisis and change. Now the Church optimistically throws open long closed windows but expects these winds to circulate through much the same renaissance structures with perhaps a partition knocked out or a new door installed here and there. The results should have been predictable.

We have then a schism of consciousness in the Roman Church, a schism of profound depth and complexity. It is a schism which touches upon the basic ways we understand God, man, history and community; the whole relationship between man and man in the world and before God. This schism touches on the fundamentals. It is more than a matter of cultural forms, or if it is only a question of forms, then the question of forms itself cannot be separated from substance.

In other words, faith itself cannot be separated from its cultural dress and clothed in another dress and pretend to be still the same. The change of culture changes all the ways we interpret the data of our existence. The old mold of thought, formal, legal and paternalistic, defining all power in a Platonic manner, as proceeding from the apex of the hierarchy downward, this mold of thought is so far removed from the historical and equalitarian culture of today that their interpretation of Christianity differs not only in conclusions, but in their understanding of prac-

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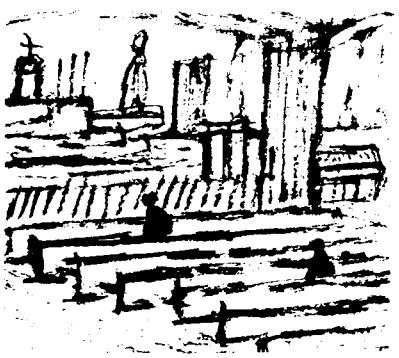
tically all the premises as well. Even when they use the same symbols, they mean very different things by these symbols. When an heir of the Counter-Reformation and a disciple of the theology of secularity use the words Christ, church, *diakonia of koinonia,* the meaning of these words are so divergent as to be in direct contradiction. It is not unfair to say that never in the history of Christianity has there existed, within the formal boundaries of a single ecclesiastical institution, poles of interpretation which share so little of what is termed "a common faith."

If the unity of the church rests on some broadly common ethos and consensus on the meaning to faith, then there is no unity in the Roman Catholic Church, but only a formal collective based on cultural lag. Nor is there any



prospect for creating a new consensus within the immediate future. The conciliar documents, far from being a focus for such a consensus, are simply a center-boundary marking pre-conciliar from post-conciliar. If we are to continue to speak of Roman Catholicism as a "community," therefore, we are faced with a real problem of what such a phrase means when applied to such a disparate aggregate. Roman Catholicism as a definable identity embracing all these in this institution has ceased to exist. The formal boundaries remain as historical accidents which temporarily contain people of the most divergent views.

By the same token, the old question of joining the church or leaving it is being relativized out of all relevance, so that the person who publicly makes a thing out of leaving the church becomes almost a reactionary who insists on clinging to the old boundaries' markers between in and out. Since no group in the church any longer has the power to impose its identity upon all or expel dissenters, no particular identity is fixed as mandatory any more, and those who, by historical accident, find themselves in this organization can choose various positions from among a spectrum of possibilities.

In other words, the whole contradiction between a church which claims universality and yet has made its identity through sectarian tactics has now broken down at all the vulnerable points. All the possibilities available in Western and perhaps even in world culture have now become possibilities for Catholics, and in the process the identity of Catholics as a distinct group becomes impossible to define. What we have instead is an intramural struggle of factions. It is a struggle because we have not yet accepted the radical pluralism which is becoming our reality.

But even the word "radical pluralism" is no magic phrase to resolve our multiplicity because our differences are real and to no small degree contradictory. We might look to Anglicanism as a smaller model of the multi-form church which Roman Catholicism might become. But the spectrum of plurality relating an Evangelical and High Church Anglican is small compared to the vast distances of life with which we have to deal. What can unite an aristocratic Spanish Trentine Cardinal who sips sherry with the landholders, and a revolutionary, Marxist-oriented priest who shares the wineskin of the insurgent peasantry? Here is no mere difference in life style, but a conflict of principle so deep that one wonders on what ground they can honestly call each other "fellow Christians." The conflict is real, because it does not admit of a neutrality which would not itself be a form of taking sides. No mere eclecticism or mutual toleration of pluralism can subsist when the differences are such as to point in prophetic judgement against the other. It is the kind of difference that calls men to choose sides.

This is schism in the most profoundly moral sense of the word. It is the sense in which we say that the gospel brings not peace, but a sword; the schism which divides those who have ears to hear from those who do not or will not. It is very dangerous to speak of the schism in these terms, and especially to identify who is who, for ultimately only God can make this final judgment. Yet we must see that this is the ultimate dimension of the schism that divides the church against itself. Here the question of the lack of a community which can be existentially affirmed shows up at the crucial point, and we see that Roman Catholicism as a "communion" is a legal fiction. Our schism then is not merely one of culture but of faith. It is an estrangement of the deepest existential commitments pitted against each other, where the word forgiveness is stilled by the word of wrath, where compromise is ruled out on principle and only conversion could effect reconciliation. The church therefore contradicts itself. In hope it would stand for the community of reconciliation, but its historical existence is rather that of man's self-estrangement and his alienation from his fellowman.

The Free Church Movement

The free church movement is the reflection of this schism. It bespeaks clearly that we are not in communion, not merely sociologically, but in our fundamental interpretation of what the gospel is. For those most serious about their commitment, this has become an intolerable situation, and the worship of the official church a deeply alienating experience. This is not simply because they would like to replace organs with guitars or wafers with

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real bread. All this is surface, although it represents the deeper issues. Fundamentally they want the church to witness to and celebrate their faith, and it does not.

This is why the official worship is so distressing, and why it becomes intolerable to sit through the typical parish liturgy. I have heard people say that they wanted to scream and run out of the church, that they had to dig their nails into the pew to keep from crying out in frustration. The sermon was a parable of incredibility, the whole format screamed out a preposterous concept of faith. If the faith celebrated here was really anyone's faith, it was not their faith. It was all the worse because it used symbols they accepted, but systematically gave them meanings they must reject as hollow, superficial or even antithetical. It is therefore no wonder that such people seek other assemblies outside the official church worship. Sooner or later one wakes up to the fact that one does not have a Sunday obligation to destroy one's soul.

In seeking other assemblies, fundamentally what is sought is a gathering that will do what a liturgy is supposed to do, namely renew the soul and not blast it further into Hell. One seeks a Christian community, a community which will sustain you in common faith, not tear you apart in alienation. The free church is then nothing else but the quest for the authentic Christian community, and a protest against the church whose reality mocks the symbols it professes to exemplify. Unless it is clearly seen that the free church is an issue of faith, and a search for a community which can authentically celebrate this faith, then all that is going on in this movement will be superficially understood, and its real import will be overlooked entirely.

The break with the official church reflects the fact that those who control the official church themselves have become a faction; one might almost say that the official church in general has become a faction within the body of those who call themselves Christians. A faction which no longer represents the whole of the people, particularly those who are thinking of Christianity in radical terms, places its stamp on the official policies of the parish and diocese. The people of the new church, consequently, are homeless. They are interlopers at the parish, not at home there. This is the immediate occasion for their departure to seek a community where they can be at home among fellow believers.

We might for a moment focus on this question of lack of representation. Can the organization itself be enlarged and structurally redesigned so that the new church can also be represented in its councils? We might imagine a democratic reorganization of the church on a representational basis, such as presently exists in modern Protestant denominations. Such an organization does not banish a hierarchical structure, but it organizes the community on many levels of responsibility from a communal basis upward, rather than from the top downward.

The Episcopal Church might be taken as a model of such a hierarchical yet communally based church. Each congregation selects lay members to represent it at a diocesan council. This, together with priests from the diocesan council and the bishops, makes up the governing synod of the diocese. Such a synod elects the bishop and makes basic legislative decisions. In a similar way representative councils of both clergy and laity meet on the national level. Here then is a hierarchical, episcopally-governed church, but one in which there is a balance and interrelation between administrative power and representative power. Such a structure does not eliminate all tensions and differences by any means, but it allows representation to various positions and provides channels of recourse and appeal. The feeling of unjust and arbitrary procedures and lack of representation and participation in decision-making so characteristic of Roman Catholicism is significantly altered in a democratically organized church.

Institutional Reform?

Here then would seem to be one focus for Catholic reform, a basic reform of the institution itself, so that it becomes representational rather than dictatorial. The theoretical framework for a concept of ministry which evolves from the people upward rather than from the apex of the hierarchy downward is already available in current theology. One has only to clarify it and put it into practice. But how do we do that? There seem to be precious few handles for a constitutional reform of the ecclesiastical structure, since the only persons empowered to make such changes have both theoretical and practical vested interest in the old regime. How do you create a revolution in an autocratic regime which has no constitutional or ideological means of democratization?

Historically, the solution to that problem was the French Revolution. The Catholic Church, in effect, is the last surviving institution of that ancient regime that was toppled in the liberal revolutions of the 18th and 19th centuries. The counterpart of this revolution in the church is, in fact, long overdue. It is a little hard to visualize this taking place by rushing the barricades, yet it is also fairly certain that it will not take place without some kind of force, since those in power seldom yield power voluntarily unless they are put in a position where they have practically no other alternative.

There is perhaps one way this could happen by nonviolent methods of revolution. One might create autonomous, representative councils of both clergy and laity for each diocese. Such councils will have to be distinguished from the parish and clergy councils which are set up within the limits allowed by the present power structure. To be truly revolutionary councils, such organizations must be autonomous, gathered and organized by the people represented independently. Such councils will have to rival the puppet councils set up by the hierarchy and will have to establish themselves as the true voice of their constit-

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uency. Such groups should affiliate on a national basis and hold national synods which would coincide with and rival the bishops' councils. By gathering organizational strength, economic power and through use of communication media to set forth their program, such revolutionary councils could ultimately succeed in negotiating with the hierarchy to reform the whole structure, and amalgamate with it, so that such representative councils become the main body of the new organization. Such movements are already in progress, and deserve support.

However, I find a marked lack of interest among the more *avant garde* Catholics and especially free church Catholics in efforts to reform and democratize the structure. Part of their indifference seems to me illegitimate, in that these people seem naively anti-institutional and are unable to realize both what a democratically organized Catholic Church might do for the good and also what harm it can do if left to be run as it is. Nevertheless, there may also be a legitimacy in their indifference, in this respect: they instinctively recognize that the issues involved in the free church movement go beyond what even a democratically organized church institution could be. The outlook that guides the free church people goes far beyond the boundaries of intra-mural ecclesiastical reorganization, and for this reason the most creative and involved people tend to feel that they have more important things to do than to play church structure games.

We have to distinguish two very different revolutions going on in Roman Catholicism and in historical Christianity as a whole today. These two movements may ultimately meet at some point in the future, and I believe they are both necessary, but for the time being they are quite distinct. One is the movement for reform of the church institution itself. It includes the efforts to democratize unrepresentative institutions like our own and bring them into closer proximity to the organizational procedures which people today feel to be mandatory for minimal justice. It also includes the official ecumenical movement which seeks to compare official positions and ultimately to effect ecclesiastical corporation mergers. At its best this movement recognizes that it is not enough merely to compare and synthesize the old, but there must be renewal and reconstruction at the same time. Such an attempt is presently underway in the Consultation on Church Union which seeks to unite the major American Protestant denominations in a single united church. This Consultation presently has ten member denominations participating.

But the time for such internal housekeeping seems to be running out fast. Church reformers are having a hard time keeping the interest of the most creative people. A whole new revolution is upon us, urgently calling our attention to its services and rendering churchly revolutions pale by comparison. This shift of interest away from the church institution comes through the realization that the church, for all of its formidable structure and real estate, has become a sideline in human experience, and church-going has been relegated to a small and increasingly insignificant corner of man's total life.

If the gospel is really to be a good news for the whole man, then it has to break out of that corner created by the secularization of society and the retreat of the church into the private umbilical sector of man's life. It must move into the fullness of man's existence, but it cannot do this as a churchly institution, but only in some new and entirely different form which abrogates the distinction between sacred and secular institutions, a distinction that has been created by the self-mythologies of church and non-church institution alike. It must decisively alter the very meanings of communion and ministry, church and mission, to break these realities out of the corner where they are but are not, and reveal them where they are thought not to be and yet are. It is precisely to this task that the free church, the church which is conscious of being the Christian community and yet decisively breaks out of the mold of historic church organizations, is now called.

Dissolving All Boundaries

These needs to which Christians are responding are such as to strain and dissolve the boundaries of all previously known church organizations, not only hierarchical, but even loose, congregational type organizations. The very idea of the church as an identifiable sacred organism, the very idea of Christianity as a specific historical culture is being thrown into question. For many people who live in this breach, interest in the church can continue only if it is understood in ways which radically transcend these cultural and institutional limitations.

If ministry is not something we can find in the street as well as the sanctuary; if communion is not something we can find around a kitchen table, if the church is not something about all mankind here and now, then we can scarcely be interested anymore in what is called the "church." There then comes about a scattered, floating Christian people who don't find church realities happening in churchly places, but carries its ecclesial consciousness into unchurched places to discern there these realities in the flesh. This diaspora church is only partly to be identified with experimental communities. Basically it is the site of a new consciousness of what the church is and where it is really happening.

Once this consciousness emerges into maturity, it will become, not the underground, but the free church. It is better understood as the free church both because of its affinities with the traditional free church position in the left wing of the Reformation, and because the reasons for dissolving the institutional reference of the word "church" have become even more compelling today. In some ways the free church parallels other movements, such as the "free press" and the "free university" which are similarly

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moving outside present power structures to find more authentic ways of doing things.

We should not think that these outside communities are produced simply by imbalances of power within the present organization which make it difficult for innovating groups to get a hearing. It is true that the power lies with a conservative group who try to hold back the pace of change and balk at the prospect of autonomy and diversity, but even if these conditions were somewhat rectified, it would not abolish the conditions which make for the free, non-institutional community. After all, the Shalom communities did not appear in Spain or Italy, but in Holland. More freedom to experiment with the liturgy might keep a few people in the parish instead of sending them into rebel communities, but the conditions which are creating the free church are much larger than that. No amount of broadening the rules of the liturgy within the present structure of the Roman rite could encompass the style of the free church, because the free church is already living out beyond the presuppositions upon which the present concept of the liturgy is based.

The difference might be summed up in one word: secularity. The liturgy of the church organization remains a sacral rite which only those empowered with the sacred power of the institution can perform, which produces a certain sacred substance which is ontologically distinct from our daily bread. The free church is tending in a direction which inevitably if not already has dissolved that magic circle of the sacred. Its priest is the charismatic leader of its community, the one whose toil and integrity earns him the place of prophet in its midst. Its sacrament is not transsubstantial bread, but our own daily bread in its fullness of meaning and its church is not of another world, but of the hopes of this very world upon which we stand. It feels no need for the ministrations of the sacred institution because its symbols, its doctrine, priesthood and sacraments have been demythologized, brought back from never-never land and returned to this earth, to that humanity with its covenant and its premise which is now seen to be the only place where these symbols really exist and have meaning.

The authentic theology of the free church, then, I would suggest is a secular theology, that worldly interpretation of the gospel toward which Bonhoeffer was groping during his last days in prison. Secular theology is not a passing fad, but it is indeed, as Bonhoeffer perceived, the theological interpretation of the present historical modality of our existence in the world. Not everyone lives contemporaneously with his own times, and for those who can live bodily today but spiritually remain in the mythological or metaphysical forms of the past, it may be possible to continue to abide in the presuppositions of sacred societies. But for those who live existentially in the present era, it is impossible to live in these presuppositions.

Secularity, as the way of understanding Christian existence today, is shaking the foundations of the sacred institution. It is at the heart of that disturbance among the monks and nuns, the traditional representatives of the "religious" life in the church. These people discover that they can no longer believe in the idea of being "religious" as distinct from being Christian, because, more profoundly, they can no longer believe in being Christian in any way that is distinct from being authentically human. In Bonhoeffer's words, "to be a Christian is not to be a religious man, but to be a man."

Behind the fracas over nuns' habits and priestly celibacy lies this more fundamental perception. All the movements to dissolve these badges of the past lie in the dissolving credibility of the sacral as such. One wishes to break down these boundaries and distinctions, these ways of being set apart from the community of the church and the community of man because, more fundamentally, one no longer believes in being a sacred person as distinct from being a person, a person standing before God and one's fellow man, to repent and respond to one another and to break bread together. In that lies all there is to say about priesthood, community, church and sacrament.

Church Life and Human Life

Therefore, it seems to me that the true significance of the free church does not lie in some demand for updated liturgies or more democratic structures for church institutions. Rather it is a sign of an entirely new way of understanding the church itself which simply and in the last analysis dissolves any need for the sort of church idea which would interpret itself as something more or something else than the life of man in the world.

This does not mean, however, that the church becomes the religion of present culture or that it simply dissolves into the world, in the New Testament sense of "this world"; that it loses itself in the social status quo or the present power structure. This is, in fact, exactly what the church did in so-called Christian civilization, and the free church is also rescuing the church from "worldliness" in this other sense of the word. Here secularity, in the sense of a creational perspective, must be sharply distinguished and contrasted to secularism or even sacralism, or whatever view may endorse a closed system of powers and principalities.

Secularity does not mean settling for things as they are because the dialectic of man's existence cannot settle for things as they are, but rather the dialectic of man's existence forces him to stand out against the powers and principalities of his own history and to move in a constant élan of self-transcendence. The community which witnesses and points to the place of this transcendence is the church, but this community must be sought wherever, in fact, it is being lived. Only there do we find the true church, while the sacred institution has become a part of those powers and principalities which have been overthrown by the power of the gospel.

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The dialectic of grace and judgment to which the gospel points is just as real as ever, but we now see that it points, not to some mythic rite carried on in a sacred space, but to the dialectic of man's real, everyday existence. The free church, therefore, deserts the sacred space in order to follow the Spirit where he is really at work. It wishes to be with Christ where he is really renewing the world. It gathers, now here, now there, not in temples, but in tents, in pilgrim communities which group temporarily and on the roadside. These communities gather wherever men find they touch each other and find some communication. They celebrate, not as a scheduled rite, but on the occasion of some real victory, to acclaim and commemorate some real breakthrough in the currency of man's existence.

Does this mean that ecclesiastical institutions ought to disappear? I think they will diminish, but they will remain, and I suspect they will do both mostly for the wrong reasons.

Institutionalization of the Christian community is a function of historical perpetuation of a particular tradition and should remain relative to that purpose. The church institution has a function as a relative and provisional instrument for the transmission of a message, for engaging in an experiment in community and for reflecting upon and handing down this reflection on this message and experiment. But the gospel upon which it reflects is not exclusively about itself.

The Holy Spirit is not simply its own *zeitgeist,* but the Spirit which underlies the creation and renewal of all the world. Christ is not simply its body, but the body which takes shape as the destiny of mankind in history. The covenant and its promise are not confined to what people called Christians do in buildings called churches, but these are the reality of man's life together and the future hope of the world. Therefore, while explicitly church structures can play a role in this mission, they can do so with theological integrity only by strictly relativizing the application of these references to themselves. They can really be the church when they know that they are in no special sense the church, but only one place where, by the grace of God, the church might be happening.

The importance of the free church, the non-ecclesiastical community, is that it makes this worldliness of the gospel and this secularity of the church clear and explicit. The free church overruns the false boundaries between church and non-church institutions and thus helps us to see more clearly what and where the church really is.

A NEW STYLE OF CHRISTIANITY

GEORGE J. HAFNER

I have never spent so much time preparing anything as I have on this. But every effort to speak about experiments in Christian community sounded trivial and out of touch with the tremendous changes taking place in society and in the church. It was only after the tragedy of April 4th that I began to understand what was wrong. The problem that was nagging at me unconsciously came into focus with the sacrifice of that new Christ figure, Martin Luther King. It made me realize that I had still been thinking of the Christian community as something fully established, with precise boundaries, a definite structure and a clearly recognizable membership. Once we accept that definition of Christian community, we can speak of doing experiments within it—like the experiments we might do in a chemistry class. What I came to realize, however, is that there is no such thing as experimenting in a Christian community because the Christian community *is* the experiment.

A Christian community is a group of people who are trying to discover whether or not the principles of Jesus can contribute something to the ongoing human project. Since the world is in a state of continual flux, Christian communities must be continually experimenting with the emerging life styles and thought patterns in order to discover how Jesus' mission can be continued in and through them.

When the Christian community stops being an experiment and thinks of itself as the Kingdom which has come rather than the kingdom which is coming, it ceases to be the presence of the living Christ in the world and becomes a community of idolators. For the mission of Christ can be discovered only in the dialectical situation in which it is constantly validating its authenticity by its contributions to the humanization of the world. There are no other criteria for testing its validity. If the Church claims to have the clue to the world's salvation, but is afraid to let its mission be tested by the world's criteria, it is giving evidence of its lack of faith in the value of Christ's message.

Our inability to see Christianity as an experiment that is unfinished and even uncertain is an evidence of our unwillingness to live by faith. All of us would like to have God and life in manageable form. Jesus is the one who calls us to break our idols and to live with the God who forsakes us so that he may call us out into the darkness of faith.

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The Christian Church has constantly wanted to settle down and so she created doctrines in final form which not only make further challenges to faith unnecessary but sinful. Certainly new doctrinal formulations, if they are to be Christian, must grow out of the Scriptures and the tradition of Christian history, but if the Church ceases to be iconoclastic it rejects the very basis of Jesus' teaching: "Believe me, woman, the hour is coming when you will worship the father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem . . . true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. That is the kind of worshipper the Father wants." Nearly everyone recognizes that we need criteria with which to "test the spirits." Yet if the criteria are to be found outside life and outside the experiment, then we have returned to idols and are unworthy of the adventure of faith to which Jesus calls us.

It has become impossible for the Church to live by faith in an experimental setting because it is so closely linked with "The Establishment." The more established the Church becomes, the more impotent she is, the less able to respond to life and the less likely to say the "hard sayings" of Jesus. One has only to look at the Church of England and Sweden to observe the tragic effects of being fully established, respectable . . . and dead. To the extent that the Church is a worldly success she will fail to be the Church of Jesus. When the Church can count her assets in hundreds of millions, when her buildings tower over the homes of the poor, when her membership is predominantly upper-class and when being a Christian is an aid to social advancement, one can only expect that she will be incapable of witnessing to the life of the man "who had not whereon to lay his head" and who was persecuted for challenging the smugness of the powerful.

To be the Establishment means inevitably to support the status quo. Therefore, any dramatic or revolutionary experimentation is seen as a threat to "God's Holy Church." The reason the Church has been so late and so timid in endorsing the fight for equal rights for black men is, of course, that she belongs to the "haves." So long as the Church has worldly power and is determined to keep it, she must move cautiously, so that she will not risk alienating establishment people.

There is a very simple way for the Church to get back into the business of being a witness to transcendent values: sell all that she has and give it to the poor. Then perhaps she may again be able to follow Jesus "outside the camp, bearing his shame." No other experiment will be of value until this one is done. Such a suggestion is considered the height of naiveté by most churchmen. Yet in an age when almost all the previous forms of witness have been taken over by civil society (hospitals, orphanages, welfare programs, etc.), the only true witness she can give to transcendent values is by divesting herself of wealth and security and declaring herself the servant who is ready to undergo death in order to live a new kind of life.

There are two objections to the hard sayings of Jesus. The first is that the kind of Christianity suggested above would so alienate most of the people in the Church that the Church would no longer be able to lead them to better things. The second objection is that the small group remaining would form an "Illuminati" with attendant feelings of superiority. I have struggled for some time with these two objections, but let me put forward some thoughts about these objections, which seem to be close to the spirit of the gospels.

The Church's Life-Style

An institution's style of life says more clearly than its official pronouncements what it really believes. Gradually, during the year before I resigned from my parish, I felt a sense of hypocrisy when I took part in the official liturgy. When we assembled for Mass we were all well dressed, respectable, adequately fed people who had spent upwards of half a million dollars to provide ourselves with a building in which to discover the Spirit of Jesus. I spoke, in my last parish, from a platform which had cost $30,000. We had renovated the sanctuary so that we could have "meaningful liturgy." Despite frequent sermons on the rights of black men, on Christian responsibility to the poor and on the immorality and wastefulness of the Vietnam war, little change took place in the parishioners' lives—or in mine—because no matter what I said or how cleverly we arranged the ceremonies, the message which came across clearly was that the Church is still primarily interested in the Church and only after that does it have leftovers for the world. No form of experiment in parish organization or liturgy can offset the message which is spoken by the Church's style of life before a word is said.

I have come to believe that small groups of concerned people, uninterested in economic or numerical success, might speak more eloquently to the real world than all the official Church pronouncements. I think we must face squarely the possibility that massive church membership may be the greatest obstacle to the proclaiming of the Christian message. We are evidently not reaching those large masses of people who crowd our churches every Sunday. A recent poll reported in the New York *Times* showed that the moral standards of churchgoers and non-churchgoers are exactly the same. Why are we so anxious to keep them coming to church? It may well be that the witness of a small intense group would have more effect on their lives than membership in a Church which has a style of life more like General Motors than a prophetic community.

The second objection must be considered seriously. A small group is in danger of developing the superiority feelings of the *"pauci electi."* It is true that persecution can develop a martyr complex in the persecuted. They sometimes shut themselves off from the evil society and

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seek comfort in self-righteously condemning all who do not accept their heroic stance. I feel, however, that this risk must be taken. There is at least some hope of preserving integrity and a spirit of servanthood when one is not "in possession." History suggests that power and affluence make prophetic witness all but impossible.

I have come to believe that the principal obstacle to Christianity in the world today is the Christian Church. It proclaims the message of Jesus with sufficient clarity to maintain its claim to be the spokesman for Christianity, but then, by its unwillingness to give up wealth and power, it convinces the multitude that the message need not be taken literally. I do not see how the mission and message of Jesus Christ can ever be presented to the world in all its challenging beauty so long as the Church continues to exist in anything approximating its present form.

Much of the problem stems from the fact that 95 percent of those who are Christians today had no more to do with being members of the Christian Church than they had to do with the color of their skin. They are biological Christians; their membership is an accident of birth. They never chose to commit themselves to a life of Christian service and should not be blamed for being more interested in building-fund drives and church suppers than in peace marches. Their commitment, if any, is to a series of theoretical doctrinal propositions and, perhaps, to a belief in Jesus as their Savior—a teaching which brings them comfort not a challenge.

What then is to be done? There is no denying that any

great idea or movement inevitably gets structured into an institution. Christians must create some institutional form in order to exist as community. The question I would like to raise, however, is: Can Christianity be revived by experimenting with parish structure and liturgy or must the whole movement be returned to a state of total experimentation in order to permit some new form to arise which may provide a vehicle for the effective living of the Christian mission?

If one looks at the so-called experimental liturgies in the Churches, at the ecumenical movement and at the structural reforms taking place within the Churches, one comes to the conclusion that the basic option is not even being considered. All the present "reforms" assume that the present Church structure is to remain; it may be slightly modified but without questioning the structure itself. This methodology and the philosophy underlying is objectionable because it is attempting to produce a modernized and more efficient power structure still conceived in the world's terms. Until the Church is willing to forego prestige, worldly power, head-counting and economic success as criteria for measuring its achievements, it can never witness like a prophet. For the prophet is free to say what he must because he has no prestige, power, ambition, or respectability to muzzle him.

Unreformed Reforms

The reform procedures now being offered by Church authorities seem to me to negate the possibility of true reform because they are still trying to tame the Christian message. Jesus was a revolutionary. He refused to accept the religious teaching of his time. He refused to get trapped into narrow legalistic descriptions of the Kingdom and the way of encountering God. He refused to be constricted by theological definitions. He spoke in parables, in paradoxes, in hyperbole. Until the Christian community can regain the freedom to see the mission of Jesus as a movement on the road, living in tents, being constantly under persecution, being uncertain and nontriumphalistic, I do not see how reformed structures can lead us anywhere except back into the quicksand.

Every time the Church has reformed itself it has gotten worse. Every Church Council in history has led to a new form of triumphalism because each time it declared that it had done away with the defects and now anyone who belonged was guaranteed the truth and life in a form more certain and more purified of evil than ever before. "This is the community," each reformer claimed, "where you can settle down with the truth and be guaranteed access to God without fear and without effort." Until we get out on the road to Emmaus again we can never hope to meet Jesus and finally recognize him in the breaking of the bread—no matter how many guitars we play during Mass.

A great movement is taking place in society at large. It is taking shape around the needs of men for liberation and humanization. We see it in the civil rights movement, the peace movement, the rebellion in Communist countries and in South America. In the Church, it is being manifested in the emergence of new *ad hoc* communities which arise to address themselves to particular needs—social concern, celebration, or research into the Christian mission. This Church-related movement has been described as the Underground Church. When the term was originated it reflected one of the main characteristics of the movement, but I believe that it now represents only one aspect of the movement and a peripheral one at that.

I would like to suggest what I think are the principal

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Twenty-one years ago *Commonweal* featured a controversial article by George F. Sheldon, "recently returned from a tour of duty with the OSS in the Far East." Because of the date, this article in our January 31, 1947 issue is still today strikingly informative.

It presented, then documented, the following claim: "After more than 80 years of French rule and five years of Japanese occupation, Vietnamese nationalists established a republican government over all of Vietnam with its capital at Hanoi. . .

In assuming control of Vietnam the declared intention of the new government has been to insure the free economic development of the country, to provide a broader educational base and to promote the democratic liberties of speech, press, assembly and the privilege of the ballot. . . All these blessings have been more or less denied the Vietnamese people during the 80-odd years of French control.

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characteristics of the movement taking place in the Church:

1. It is a search for a new style of Christian life and a new form of Christian presence in the world. Christians who are aware of the movement taking place in the world want to be able to contribute whatever insights they can from the Christian viewpoint. In order to do this they are ready to take a radical approach to questions both of doctrine and practice.

2. Another feature is variously described as pragmatic ecumenism, secular ecumenism or free ecumenism. Christians of various confessions are crossing denominational lines as they recognize needs in their world; they work together to stand with man in his struggle for the humanization of society. In this sense the movement might be characterized as non-sectarian rather than ecumenical, for the objective is not church reunion but reconciliation and healing wherever needed. Its primary concerns are human rather than church needs.

3. There is a great reluctance to form new institutional structures. The people who form the core of the new movement tend to resist fixed structures and opt in favor of provisional structures and "ad hoc" groupings.

4. The distinction between lay and clerical is seen only as a distinction of function within the church community. The distinction is one of function not degree of dedication. Both clerics and laity are viewed as having equal responsibilities to the world.

5. Finally, we observe what might be called a post-liberal attitude, which expresses itself in a distrust of mere liberalism as an effective instrument of change. The movement seems dedicated to revolution, i.e., to provoke change through strong and direct action. Christianity as a revolutionary movement seems to be a key concept in these communities.

I suppose all of us have crystal balls into which we peer now and then to see the Church of the future. Perhaps we should leave the future to the criterion offered by Our Lord: "By their fruits you shall know them." It has been the inability of the hierarchy to permit many plants to grow until harvest time which has produced the Underground Church. I should like to suggest to the hierarchy that they take seriously the words addressed to the hierarchy of first-century Judaism by Gamaliel when an underground group called the "Followers of the Way" appeared before the Sanhedrin: "If this enterprise, this movement of theirs is of human origin it will break up of its own accord; but if it does in fact come from God you will not only be unable to destroy them but you may perhaps find yourselves fighting against God."

"Perhaps" is the key word. Neither the Underground Church nor the hierarchy can at this point feel certain that they speak for the Spirit of God. It is a time for both, therefore, to enter into a period of repentance and self-appraisal, searching as best they can how they may continue to "do the truth in love."

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SOLDIER BOYS

THE STAGE

I was an advocate of *The Deputy* as Rolf Hochhuth wrote it in German, though not of the execrable Broadway adaptation and production. But to his new play, *Soldiers,* in any form, I can say only "Dismiss!" This is one set of soldiers that will die, not fade away.

Soldiers is a tract, not a play. Even *The Deputy* was perhaps more of a homily than a drama, but at least it was a dramatized homily. The new work in its uncut form is half stage directions, half polemical set pieces. Until recently, Sir James Barrie was the champion stage direction-writer, and I often thought that if one would only put Barrie's SDs on the stage—say, as a Greek chorus—and the plays off it, the English (or Scottish) theater would gain a dramatist of interest. But Hochhuth's SDs are, unfortunately, quite unactable. Much more epic even than Barrie's, they roam all over history, philosophy, literature, literary criticism (an attack on the Theater of the Absurd, for example), and would defy an Emlyn Williams or Hal Holbrook, or even an entire Drama Quartet, to turn them into salable theatrics.

As for the play proper, it is all historical conjecture, humanitarian pamphleteering, strutting stereotypes that verge on Hollywood's war efforts of the '40s. *Soldiers* takes as many liberties with blank verse as with history, and would take, like *The Deputy,* six or seven hours to perform in full. I no longer consider this proof of divine afflatus: a playwright, unless he can pull off a great dramatic poem like *Peer Gynt* or *To Damascus,* should learn to say what he has to say within dramatic confines. Hochhuth uses the drama as a convenient conveyance; it needs to be a necessity.

If in the uncut work the ideas have at least a moderate complexity, the acting version reduces everything to a cross between a living newspaper and an animated cartoon. What is the issue here: the character of Churchill, as benevolent dictator? the saturation bombing of civilian populations in German cities? the political assassination of the Polish general, Sikorski? Churchill's alleged complicity in that act? the criminality of all wars? Phrases and attitudes parade across the stage in shaky close-order drill and no one can see people under the uniforms, whether they be the soldier's khaki, the clergyman's cloth, or the striped trousers of the diplomat. Rhetoric, often muddy, grapples with counterrhetoric, and now and then the ghost of a trite love story flutters its limp shroud.

The Deputy had shape to it, and people; and, despite the inevitable outcome, suspense. Here there are only scraps of opportunism, savagery, and righteous indignation mounted on poles and waved at one another; though they might scare away crows, there is no harvest to protect. Actually, Clifford Williams has directed with such staginess, schematism, and lack of movement as would probably not even keep crows off the actors. To make it stiffer yet, the play has a frame: Dorland, a mortally ill former R.A.F. officer, is staging in Coventry Cathedral this play of his about Churchill (in which he, Dorland, also figures) as a warning to mankind; but his own son, a current R.A.F. officer, remains crassly unconvinced of the evil of being a soldier. This fearful symmetry is framed, in turn, by the awful décor of Ralph Koltai, whose Coventry Cathedral may be the worst single set this year.

The performances are, at the very best, uninteresting. John Colicos, a good actor, has been induced to do Churchill as a cabaret act—a nightclubbish or nightmarish impersonation, all shlurps, cluckings and harrumphings, the words swallowed by the cigar. We shall have to do the same thing with *Soldiers* as with the fire-bombing of Dresden: forgive, try to forget, and hope for no recurrence. (*Closed at the Billy Rose*)

The Boys in the Band by Mart Crowley is the first near-Broadway play in which everyone is homosexual: the characters range from the screaming queen to the latent homosexual, which is the nearest thing to heterosexuality we get. All types are here, including the male whore and the butch closet queen, and they manage, barring some lapses into oversimplification, to ring true. In the first act, where the play sticks to cunning exchanges of digs along with mildly scandalous exposition, it is quite funny. Crowley's bitchy repartee is no less clever than Albee's and considerably more honest. There is even a breezy bonhomie afoot from time to time: "Well, there's one thing to be said for masturbation: you certainly don't have to look your best."

But in the second act, when the going gets serious, what with searching statements about the problems of inversion and human nature, things get pat and unconvincing. The playwright's language deserts him, "If we could just not hate ourselves so much—if we could just learn not to hate ourselves quite so very much!" and specious psychologizing crops up along with facile proselytizing, "With the right wine and the right music, there are damn few [heterosexuals] who aren't curious."

The play concerns a birthday party for an almost psychopathic, bright but homely Jewish invert given by a vaguely artistic, wholly amoral but churchgoing homosexual playboy (or call-boy), and what happens when a married but separated alleged heterosexual stumbles on this party, turning its amicable hostilities into open warfare. The central plot device is (shades of Albee, again) a sadomasochist party game, not believable in itself and leading to a series of rather superficial dénouements. Robert Moore has directed it glossily, somewhat too slickly, though some of the poses struck are appro-

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priate. The acting is fairly good on the whole, with Kenneth Nelson as the host better than that, and Cliff Gorman a hilarious yet also touching queen.

I doubt that if this were a heterosexual play much attention would be lavished on it, or indeed owed it. Such as it is, however, it combines a certain pioneering sensationalism, some genuine merit, and enough surface polish to achieve a success it almost deserves. (*At Theatre Four*) JOHN SIMON

WAR DOGS

THE SCREEN

Last week it was "War and Peace," and this week it's "A Face of War"—no peace. I often wonder as I watch such well-made films about war if it's quite cricket for the battle scenes to be so beautifully photographed. The color photography and sweeping display of the uniformed "extras" in the battles of Borodino and Austerlitz in "War and Peace" are magnificent. And the black-and-white photography of silhouetted Marines advancing in the night or of the protective barbed wire in the twilight on a Vietnam battlefield is a thing of beauty that even Ingmar Bergman might envy. In the history of cinema, good camera work of soldiers in action goes all the way back to Griffith's "The Birth of a Nation" and "Intolerance." War in art goes back much further. But the important thing, if we're going in for art, is the non-glorification of war. Perhaps the best of the true artists who showed war in all its misery is Goya. And it is to the great credit of the Russian "War and Peace" and the new American documentary feature film "A Face of War" that both, in spite of or because of their artistry, make strong anti-war statements.

"A Face of War" was made by Eugene S. Jones who did the production, direction, and some of the photography; with two other photographers and a sound man he spent some three months in 1966 in Vietnam with the leading platoon of Mike Company, Third Battalion, Seventh Marine Regiment. In between the opening scenes showing close-ups of hands loading rifles, preparing grenades, etc., and the finale 77 minutes later, this documentary records the encounters and daily events of the platoon; the daytime advances through tall brakes with close-ups of young men's eyes scrutinizing the grasses and terrain for the enemy; the night patrols through semi-darkness as eyes search for snipers; the medics attending the wounded after a bomb explodes; officers briefing men about the battle they are going into.

"A Face of War" is a film of contrasts of war; the sudden death, the tedium of waiting; the tension of battle, the relief of a football game played in thick mud and followed by a swim in a muddy pond; the birth of a Vietnamese baby whose mother is tended by a Marine corpsman, the death of a horribly wounded child; Vietnamese women crying and wailing over the death of a soldier, a radio giving out with "Jingle Bells."

Fortunately "A Face of War" is not cluttered with background music. The sounds we hear are the sounds of war; bullets, bombs, officers instructing, a priest's short sermon during Mass, the dialogue of soldiers (the Negro who delivers the baby says, "That's a pretty strong kid," and another Marine replies, "A cute one too."), the moaning of the wounded ("Please take me home," says one badly hurt boy). Perhaps the most amazing thing about "A Face of War" is its compassion for people. It is objective. The enemy is not the enemy; the enemy is war. No narration drums this in as the film advances, but its visuals do. And we realize as we watch that the wounded and dead on the field of battle are not actors (as in "War and Peace") but real wounded and dead. And it is to the credit of everyone connected with the film (including especially its good editor, Jono Roberts) that this picture of war's chaos and destruction and waste is not so depressing that we can't bear to look at it. (This was my objection to that futuristic look at the next war, "The War Game.") The film takes no stand on the Vietnamese question, but it does condemn war—all war. And perhaps its most compassionate scene is the epilogue during which the various members of the platoon (some of whom we have come to know well) pass before the camera as we read their names, home towns, and ages. Most of the ages are 19, 20 and 21. PHILIP T. HARTUNG

RONALD ELLIS

THE SWALLOW

Like pages flicked by the wind,
The sound of his falling.
He clung to the garage windowsill,
His feathers cleanly laced
Against the rough, dusty wood.
He slid through the cage of my fingers,
Whirred down like a maple spinner,
Cooling my face with his small wind.
He stood by the power mower, his eyes
Flashing in the light I flashed,
His feet chalked now with dust.
Twice I raised him, twice he fell
From the nest. I left him to the night,
Flightless, soundless.

In the morning
The kids laughed as he teetered on the wire
And grew in flight the seed of his calling;
I watched them, cage of my eyes,
And thought of him falling.

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BOOKS

William Gibson and a ritual of catharsis

A Mass for the Dead

WILLIAM GIBSON

Atheneum, $7.95

TERENCE DEWSNAP

William Gibson's prose elegy intends to purchase redemption for its subject: his family and his own developing self. Mandolin, banjo and upright piano of his grandmother's Sunday evenings are atmosphere for rediscovering the dead, the errant uncles and stoical aunts, the pioneers and nest-makers who found nourishment in the sprawling connections of blood and the casual gathering of clan.

In a tension of fact and insight the book measures family life. Describing an early photograph of his parents —mother tense, father jauntily smiling —Gibson observes, "it was a portrait not only of contrasts, but of a nation's lower middle class coming out of its cocoon. However they fought, they were yoked by an aspiration to self-respect, down to the minutiae of unwrinkled collars, and a conviction, held before and since, that they could live better than their fathers."

This inherited need to "live better" is probably central to Gibson's career. After years of frustration and one volume of poems, he struck gold in his '40s with his novel, *The Cobweb,* and his plays, "Two for the Seesaw" and "The Miracle Worker." But he lusts for more than commercial success. Forced to collaborate with alien talents in staging "Two for the Seesaw," he made peace with himself by writing *The Seesaw Log.*

A Mass for the Dead is also a handwashing, and in it Gibson, instinctively a loner, recognizes himself as a collective identity in whom the impulses of family are reborn. Having moved from the family in a young man's rebellion—sex, classical music, Communism, poetry, bohemian—he returns to discover a religion of life and a definition of manhood.

His point is double: that the only Yea is the life transmitted from generation to generation and that life is essentially unoriginal. The application is never easy. A heroic figure from childhood is his father's favorite brother, Jim, a gifted athlete killed in World War I. Gibson feels required to quote Jim's letter to his mother: "We didn't take many prisoners, as it is easier to kill them. They certainly are a bunch of cowards. Just as soon as they see they are caught they come running up to you with their hands in the air yelling, Kamerad! You would hear one of our boys say, Here is your Kamerad—bang!—a shot and it would be all over." Gibson then recognizes "my uncle's shadow that falls upon my boys . . . by his bed I see the toy rifle to which he has lashed a rubber knife as bayonet, and I think how the animal wants to kill." This second effort at seeing makes a success of his search for the truth.

But truth is not enough. Gibson wants to square a spiritual debt incurred in betrayal of family love. By elegizing his family, he would give them the immortality Shakespeare offered the mistress of his sonnets, yet he senses the limits of an immortality in memory. Brought up a Catholic, he has rejected that religion as life-denying. As he anxiously probes his experience for a meaningful substitute, time, the now-time which alone has validity, is an obsessive concern. "In this picking over the rags of my dead, week after month after year, I have turned fifty; . . ." Elegy demands a supernatural structure, which his religion of the loins does not offer.

This romantic irony of deed falling short of desire relates to the book's one serious weakness, a blurring of focus in the autobiographer's delineation of self. Gibson mourns the conventional loss with eloquence, but when an immediate response is called for, as when he describes the deaths of his father and mother by cancer, he hides his own horror and fear (he has suffered from the stomach ulcers which signaled his father's decline) behind a journalist's mask. However, such evasiveness is partly a product of self-restraint and honest doubt and while it lessens, it does not stifle the affirmation.

Gibson's technique, in the fast-moving, often comic episodes and in the occasional prose-poetry, is to move from seemingly unrelated facts to a sudden crystalization. He pretends to be thumbing through his mother's missal, using chapter headings from the Mass; the ordering is chronological, the random Latin participates in the imagery and mood of appropriate stages. In his new Mass, he is creating a ritual of catharsis which establishes, against the threat of alienation, the commonness of man. If at times his style overreaches (he chooses *defunct* over *dead*), he builds consistently and forces us to accept his extravagant potlatch.

His naturalism includes a respect for the quality of life. He sings of small virtues, the minor stoicism of parenthood, the value of self-respect in clean pots and pans. Documenting the changes in traditional family attitudes, he speaks of the grief of the parent unable to soften the grief of the child. He recalls his father's striking him for insulting his mother, and afterwards his father's fruitless attempt at reconciliation. His own son says "Oh, keep quiet" to his mother, and he strikes him, then in a restaurant booth makes amends by recounting to his son his own boyhood offense. The difference between then and now is the new parent's ability to make amends through speech, but it is not clear whether his son, who understands, or William Gibson nourishing his kernel of guilt, is better equipped for life.

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Included in this interesting and often majestic chronicle are twenty poems, hymns to nature and strivings of self. "Apology for No Poems" assesses:

what claps
At me now is a windful of coins,
Done

Is my dance of lonely
Sticks. Kingdom is come in my
fathering loins
And a summer is on
My griefless head; no wind is ill.
Only,

The birds are gone.

Richard Wagner: The Man, His Mind, and His Music

ROBERT W. GUTMAN

Harcourt, Brace, $12.50

HARRIS GREEN

Patience and endurance will always be demanded of those who listen to Wagner, but these virtues will no longer be required in equal measure of those who want to read about him. Robert W. Gutman, a professor at the State University of New York, has managed to deliver a great deal of the heady promise of his title—and in just one volume! To learn the facts of Wagner's life, readers once had to tunnel through Ernest Newman's four-volume biography and risk being smothered, as in a cave-in, by Newman's discursiveness and cold-oatmeal prose. (Wagner's notoriously unreliable autobiography, *Mein Leben,* was a mother lode of fool's gold.) Gutman pays Newman due respect, but he doesn't hesitate to disagree with him. The major differences are all in Gutman's favor: his writing is far more vivid and blessedly concise; his wit is anything but donnish.

Wit is indispensable for anyone who attempts to guide readers into the vast, echoing corridors of the Wagner mind ("a labyrinth of irrelevant, convoluted thought" where the burning issues of the nineteenth century were "touched upon with the aplomb of ignorance"). As an autodidact, Wagner gorged on theory but slimmed on fact. He wrote essays and tracts in abundance during bouts of composer's block to explain—often to himself—what his music would do once he got around to composing it. Those who prefer to venture in on their own can try the paperback, *Richard Wagner on Music and Drama* (Dover, $2.75); but they should be warned that it starts fogging up almost immediately after its introduction by editors Goldman and Sprinchorn. The reader guided by Gutman can take short cuts, avoid dead ends, and be warned of the racist gas that escapes all too often from dank byways. After such depressing spelunking, one marvels all the more upon emerging to find "Tristan," "Meistersinger," and "Walküre" serene upon the heights.

Gutman's intention was to relate Wagner "to the history of ideas," so naturally his book frequently assumes the form of a massive put-down (monotonously so, at times). Some readers may well wish he had spent his first-rate narrative gifts summarizing libretti, which he flatly refuses to do. (He presumes—rightly, I think—that readers in this era of LPs and tape already know stuff like Lohengrin's grounds for divorce.) Anyone familiar with the operas will more often than not be fascinated when Gutman flashes-forward during his biographical narrative to show how this incident or that attitude reappears in the Wagner *oeuvre*.

This 20:20 foresight becomes a gimmick if the need to find an echo of the Wagner life in the Wagner art becomes obligatory. I dare say Gutman is correct in insisting that racism is at the mystic heart of "Parsifal" (practically anything can be read into a drama of Buddhist redemption decked out in Christian symbols), but he is more than a bit desperate when he sees homosexuality rising amid the fumes of "Tristan." I suspect Gutman must have the relationship between Tristan and his liege, King Mark, homosexual because Wagner's young patron, Ludwig II, of Bavaria, was an undoubted homosexual. Tristan has been smeared!

As proof, Gutman cites Isolde's enigmatic taunt in Act I: depending on whether Wagner meant to write *"ihm"* or *"ihn,"* she tells Tristan that he will be slain either by one of her lovers or one of his. (He is stabbed by his long-time companion, Melot.) I'm afraid Gutman is so eager to make art recapitulate the themes of life that he refuses to give full weight to evidence for the defense, namely: similar slip-ups abound in the libretti; the text also hints at Melot's infatuation with Isolde (not Tristan); the opera was written seven years before Wagner met Ludwig; and Wagner was a raging heterosexual.

Gutman gives the music the least study. When he does bear down on it, he may well tell a reader more than he wants to know. One chapter given over to the *Leitmotif* is particularly thorough and unintentionally ironic: in a complete formal break from the rest of his book, Gutman chides Wagner for not following through on *his* formal plan—then ends up admitting that the operas work, anyway.

Fortunately, no other great composer has the extra-musical fascination of Richard Wagner. The libretti are so resonant with myth and symbol, with hidden desires and forbidden longings, with redemption and heaven-searing conflagration that they might well have held us, even with music of a lower-octane content.

Then there is Wagner the man. Gutman has fully recreated this obnoxious, lecherous little ingrate. In these pages, he continues to hold the same positive-negative attraction-repulsion that he had turned full force upon his long-suffering friends and hapless creditors. Gutman never lets the reader forget that Wagner went ever deeper into debt to insulate himself with luxury against the harshness of the world, that he borrowed the wives of friends when he needed inspiration, that he never paid for everyday outfits like a "yellow damask dressing gown, pink tie, and voluminous black velvet cape lined with rose satin," that under these working conditions and in those work clothes he composed some of the wonders of the world. Wagner was a towering genius. Wagner was a pluperfect swine. Both undeniable facts are set forth with endearing candor in this fine biography.

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How foolish to saddle it with that all too Wagnerian price! Harcourt, Brace has done a splendid job of bookmaking, fully illustrated with many all-star cast photos (The Great One, Liszt, Ludwig, Nietzsche, Gobineau, Hitler). But $12.50! Hasn't it heard that Wagnerites are a patient breed? They are bound to wait for the paperback, just as they wait for the Magic Fire.

Living Questions to Dead Gods

JACQUES DURANDEAUX

Sheed and Ward, $3.95

ANSELM ATKINS

Durandeaux's thesis is essentially this: nothing the believer says about God is philosophically valid, and yet the believer cannot accept the philosopher's dismissal as final. The believer always needs the philosopher to clear away the rank growth of false belief; and the philosopher needs the believer, who stands as a witness to the fact of an experience which philosophy's acid never succeeds in obliterating. The God whom the believer ordinarily "projects" ("God-the-product") is no God at all. God can only be some "Other" whom one unexpectedly meets. Believing means asking serious questions about God. Or not even that—for the very questions one proposes are too anthropomorphic ever to bend away from the human and point toward the divine. The believer therefore is someone for whom the question of God just happens to have arisen.

Not all of this is new. Droves of contemporary thinkers agree automatically that our notion of God, like all our thoughts, is a culturally conditioned construct. Historical relativism is acknowledged on all sides—if not as a final solution, at least as the unavoidable starting point of speculation. We also realize at last the consequences of the ancient awareness that "words fail" when it comes to God; for the inadequacy of religious discourse has become the central issue in much philosophical theology. And that God is "other" we are almost tired of hearing.

Soren Corita

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FOOTNOTES AND HEADLINES

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What is perhaps new is Durandeaux's analysis of the relation between philosopher and believer. That Aquinas may have settled this to his own satisfaction is no help to a Barthian (the author seems to be one) or to anyone whose thinking and belief takes account of the legacy of Marx, Freud, and Einstein. Durandeaux does not lead the assault on belief himself. He accepts it as an accomplished fact. Rather, his analysis surveys the battleground from a height, so that he can say, "Granted that these things are so, what is one then to think?" Nothing very encouraging.

The believer must submit his belief to the philosopher's requirements. The first of these is that the believer be *serious*. For Durandeaux, serious religious discourse is limited to the asking the questions. (How far this is from the church's traditional view of the believer's grasp of religious truth may be judged by a recent papal allocution on the "possession" of truth.) Secondly, since questions always refer back to the questioner and his culturally conditioned problematic, a serious question can only be one that has disengaged itself from the questioner. And this it cannot do. Accordingly, a serious question can never be one that I myself ask, or one that I find ready to hand in my tradition. It can only be one that is unexpectedly asked of me or for me by the Other who breaks in upon me with an "irruptive presence." Here, however, I lose Durandeaux, for I do not see that he has made clear what sort of thing this "irruption" of God is, or how it could ask or be a question, or how its questions, once asked, could be philosophically or empirically distinguished from ordinary questions. Durandeaux has done well, I think, to take Feuerbach's critique of religion to heart; but he has not provided a philosophically satisfying rejoinder. The issue is important and is worth another try.

The believer and the philosopher are bound together dialectically. Religion without philosophical criticism builds sand castles; philosophy which does not have to reckon with the phenomenon of belief becomes Voltaireish or Ayerish. This is a timely statement, especially since Durandeaux speaks as an ordinary believer rather than as a specialist in philosophical theology. He is in effect saying that the days of uncritical religion are over. The "Dieu mort" of his title refers to the god of any such religion. Unfortunately many currents in the post-conciliar church ignore altogether the philosophical quandary of belief today. I heartily sympathize with Daniel Callahan when he remarks in a comment on Michael Novak (in *The Religious Situation: 1968*, p. 235) that the pressures of philosophical problems prevent him from taking part in the general enthusiasm for liturgy, Scripture, and sacraments.

On the other hand, Durandeaux is not quite so helpful when he deals with religious experience. Philosophy (which here includes psychology and cultural anthropology) *reduces* man's religious expressions to aspects of man himself. The experience of God's "irruptive presence," Durandeaux holds, cannot be so reduced. "The philosopher finds that there is always something in the believer's system of practices that cannot be reduced: the experience of a presence which has been gradually emptied of all content susceptible to representative expression, either sensible or intellectual. The believer affirms that God is there, that he knows he is there, even though the philosopher has deprived him of all his images, ideas and feelings of God."

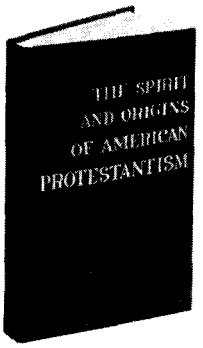
But why can't it be reduced? No philosopher would regard the above as anything but sheer unproved assertion. Since Durandeaux has not taken on the task of demonstrating philosophy's case against religion, I suppose he is not obliged to uphold religion's case in the face of philosophy either. As a programmatic suggestion his idea may have some worth.

But it is cavalier to lay down a priori that there is something philosophy *cannot* "reduce." Philosophy is habitually careless of religion's cannots. A further hitch in the argument is the notion of "presence," which is explained no more clearly here than in Dewart. Moreover, the British philosophers have pretty well charted the pitfalls of talking about something that has been emptied of all intellectual or experiential content; but Durandeaux does not advert to these problems.

The form of Durandeaux's book is interesting: an initial aphoristic statement (two pages), a short commentary, a longer commentary on the commentary, and a conclusion. The introduction by Gabriel Vahanian is also worth reading. As an American, I find myself put off by the self-conscious, introspective, Cartesian-phenomenological meditation Durandeaux takes himself through. The French may like this, but I think that there are easier ways of being serious. *Vita brevis.*

PAPERBACKS

Some of the more worthwhile: *The Crystal Spirit* by George Woodcock (Minerva, $2.45), a thorough and snappy biography-critique of George Orwell. A bit lighter reading is the reissue of James Thurber's *My Life and Hard Times* (Bantam, 75¢), with the usual pungent illustrations by the author.



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Thurber never seems to date and *My Life* is in that genre of modest profundity that is as fresh as a morning rain in spring.

No dearth of weighty political tomes this month, either, ranging all the way from the reissue of Che Guevara's *Guerrilla Warfare* (Vintage, $1.65), with a prefatory note by that inveterate revolutionist I. F. Stone, to Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* (Avon, $1.65). You don't hear too much about the conservatives in this election year in which everyone seems to be spouting Tom Hayden; Kirk is a good reminder of those folk who are even less in the American tradition than are the Marxists whose foreignness they never cease berating.

Paul Goodman often seems to be more of a conservative in his restless communitarianism and individualist bent than the Kirk people, and is a much better writer. His two best humanist essays are included in *People or Personnel* and *Like a Conquered Province* (Vintage, $1.95). Goodman's anarchism, so much in vogue these days, is offset by Peter Laslett's *The World We Have Lost* (Scribners, $2.45), a comparison of pre- and post-industrial England. Laslett is more a "realist" than Goodman, a skeptic who wants to inquire whether the world we have lost was indeed more "appropriate" than that which it bequeathed to us.

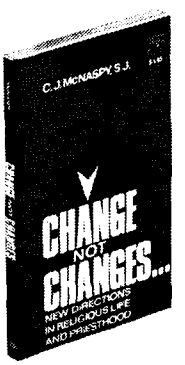
Of the campaign books, Robert Kennedy's *To Seek a Newer World* (Bantam, 95¢) still is the most literate, the most compelling, despite what you might think of its putative author. Newfield has called Kennedy the first candidate of the poor blacks, and the book proves that of all the candidates, he has the best knowledge of our urban miasma, the soundest instincts on the alienation of our minorities. These qualities are paying off in the primaries.

Speaking of urban problems, Avon has brought out Studs Terkel's remarkable street document, *Division Street, America* ($1.25). Terkel has stepped in where sociologists have feared to tread, and in the process has enhanced our understanding of basic components of our common life, cut off from the liberal, professional classes and left to airy sociologizing.

Briefly noted: *New American Review Number Three* (Signet, $1.25), containing Albert Goldman's history of rock music, a playfully pornographic story by Philip Roth, and other contributions that are making NAR the best of the literary magazines . . . *Get Off My Back!*, edited by Sondra Touster (Dell, 75¢), an anthology of black humor touching on psychological issues; all the old favorites included—Heller, Southern, Purdy, Baker, Alan Harrington. . . . Vladimir Nabokov's *Despair* (Pocket Books, 75¢), one of the master's early works, convoluted, electric, subtle to the point of distraction. . . . *On War* by Raymond Aron (Norton, $1.45), a classic on the subject, hard-nosed, realistic. Aron is perhaps the best of the international theorists.

Other Goodies: *The Great Evasion*, by William Appleman Williams (Quadrangle, $2.25). Williams is the first, and one of the best of America's "revisionist" historians, a Marxist whose ideas on America's responsibility in heating up the Cold War in the 1940's were catalytic. The "great evasion," of course, is America's failure to face up to Marx. . . . *Marxist Social Thought*, edited by Robert Freedman (Harvest, $3.45), is what America ought to face up to. A good introduction to Marx. Meanwhile, the Russians, who have also refused to face up to Marx, occasionally produce some idiosyncratic types cast from a different mold. One is Nicolai Amosoff whose book, *The Open Heart* (Ballantine, 75¢), is both an indictment of science and a tribute to the men who suffer trying to breathe life into it. The book reads like a good novel; its author is an important Soviet surgeon who pioneered open-heart surgery techniques. . . . Speaking of Communists, Arthur Koestler's *Arrival and Departure* (Bantam, 95¢), is out; it is a sequel to *Darkness at Noon*. Lots of suffering.

JONATHAN EISEN



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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 315)

Item: The success of Gandhi's nonviolence is attributable to "the coincidence that the English were enough a part of the moral tradition he evoked to make them susceptible to his tactics." The implication is that Gandhi's success was a historical fluke and from it no more general lessons should be derived. The uniqueness of that instance, supposedly, is that the English happened to share a community of values which would have been violated by running the trains through and slaughtering thousands of Gandhi's followers who were lying on the tracks. It is true that Gandhi challenged the moral tradition which the English shared. But a people's moral tradition is not a "coincidence," it is not something that a people happen to have at a particular moment and can then lightly set aside. A moral tradition, a community of values, a set of beliefs, myths and self-images—these are essential to a viable society. A strategy for change that confronts a people with the choice of either accommodating the change or of consciously surrendering the values by which they think they live is a most realistic strategy, striking at the heart of the society.

This is the strategy by which Gandhi confronted the English. It is the strategy which disillusioned the French people about their imperialistic venture in Algeria. It finally became clear to too many Frenchmen that they could not survive as a people if they were to continue on a course that systematically required the methodology of torture and the mocking of every intuition of *humanitas*. And this is the strategy which has brought about a large part of the American people's disaffection from our course in Vietnam.

People who give little thought to the nuances of foreign policy theorizing are rightly repulsed by the bloody horror this nation has unleashed upon the peasants of that war-ravaged peninsula. Against all their native impulses of patriotism, emerges the realization that this brutal spectacle, and not all the rhetoric about defending the free world, is what America may be all about. And when enough people begin to sense Camus' dilemma of not being able to love justice and love one's country too, change becomes possible.

With excruciating realism, Dr. King understood this strategy and its uses. In November, 1967, he revealed his plans for the Poor People's Campaign, calling the effort "a last, desperate appeal to America to respond to nonviolence." Shortly before his death he told me that he understood "with profound sorrow" what the alternatives are for America. He believed that the Campaign would marshal all the arguments and appeals that would evoke a response from what is best in America's self-consciousness. If nonviolence failed, he felt certain a chain reaction of violence and repression would be sparked and would finally lead to an ascendance of fascist power in America, power that would not shrink from the systematic elimination of the black and the poor. He did not expect this to happen because he perceived "a dimly enlightened self-interest" at work in the American public and among its political leaders.

Dr. King was not, in the words of the editorial, "looking for a miracle, the kind that breaks all the usual rules of reality." He was following a strategy of raising the stakes high enough so that America would respond in its own self-interest, recognizing that the option is to surrender its moral self-consciousness or to sacrifice whatever elements of democracy exist in this country. He saw that a people would violate its own ethos, would accommodate its morality to the expediencies of a particular dilemma. But a people attempts to rationalize its behavior in terms of that same ethos and that same morality. Dr. King was moving on the course that would make it impossible for white Americans to

REVIEWERS

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HARRIS GREEN writes occasional music criticism for these pages.

FATHER ANSELM ATKINS, O.C.S.O., contributes frequently to *Continuum* and other journals.

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persist in their rationalizations. That a people would not deliberately and self-consciously repudiate its own moral tradition was, he believed, one of "the usual rules of reality." The success of social movements, from abolition to the labor movement to the protest against America's war in Vietnam, supports his thesis. The fact that all these successes are partial is due to the ambiguity of history itself. Those who advocate complete victory are the unrealists. The quest for unequivocal success is the fantasy of many who today indulge in the rhetoric of violent revolution. About the consequences of violent revolution in America, Dr. King was a man without illusions.

"The last years of Dr. King's life," the editorial continues, "were confused and confusing." What happened in the last years? In the last years he engaged in the Northern manifestations of America's racial dilemma, demonstrating that it was not susceptible to the simple "white approved" methods of the movement in the South. In Chicago he consciously illustrated for white America the depth of its racism. In the last years he forcefully articulated the relationship between domestic injustice and the war in Vietnam. He dramatically moved the "civil rights mentality" to focus on the larger question of national priorities. He shaped a Poor People's Campaign that addressed the whole impetus for change to the critical problem of America's economic system. He was making clear that legal and political rights are inadequate unless supported by economic rights. He was speaking of an economic bill of rights, of "rights in life and not just rights in law." He was preparing the nation to confront militant nonviolence, nonviolence without the legitimation of federal protection. In the months before his death, those who worked with Dr. King were impressed by the calmness, the deliberation, the sobriety which marked his words and acts. He knew that the movement was moving into a radical new dimension. He gave every indication of knowing precisely what he was doing. If *Commonweal* found all this "confused and confusing," I trust it will occasion some introspective questioning of its own editorial perception.

There is more in the editorial that is, I believe, inaccurate in fact and judgment. But it is not chiefly the inaccuracies that are disappointing. Rather is it the editorial's failure to recognize the singular significance of the historical moment that was Martin Luther King, Jr. As treacherous as the aching loss we have suffered in his death is the failure to measure aright the meaning of his life. Who that is left can compel America to listen to the cry, "Repent for the kingdom of God is at hand"? Who that is left can compel America both to face the ghastly wounds afflicted by her injustices and to resort to the balm of Gilead in the creative application of her resources? Who that is left can lead a movement forcing America to decision, confronting her with the judgment and the promise, the hope and the terror, of the future?

On the death of this man in whom God so graciously visited our time, it would have been better to leave a page barren of type, except for the words of Psalm 130, "Out of the depths we cry to you, O Lord!" RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

Reply

We are chagrined that Pastor Neuhaus felt compelled to write a letter of protest about our editorial on Dr. King. We fully agree with his evaluation of the meaning and importance of Martin Luther King. We do not subscribe to the arguments against nonviolence which we summarized in the beginning of our editorial and which Pastor Neuhaus took at face value. The point of the editorial was, in fact, to discredit these arguments and to show the effectiveness of Dr King's life as concrete evidence of their weakness. We do not believe that Dr. King was an "ingenuous dreamer," and the language of the editorial was not meant to imply he was. Nonetheless, Pastor Neuhaus' letter is welcome. Already, the rhetoric of violence is staging a return. It is too soon to forget what Dr. King stood for; it will always be too soon. THE EDITORS

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There is no time left for waiting

Like many others, we have waited and waited and waited for our government to realize that it is not "trading with the enemy" to help those who are the victims of war—no matter where they happen to live.

In waiting, we have walked the first mile, and the second, and more, not wishing to needlessly risk prosecution and imprisonment for acts of conscience, much as we believe the government's blockade of relief to be morally and legally without sanction.

Members of our committee have met with representatives of the Administration to explain our concern and to underscore the appalling consequences of America's war upon the Vietnamese, particularly upon the peasant population. Whole villages are incinerated, crops poisoned, rural trails and waterways strafed. The toll is primarily taken from the innocent, those least equipped to survive.

As Dr. Richard Perry (three times a volunteer physician in South Vietnam) has written, "Even when the Vietcong do behave barbarously, for example, torture a Vietnamese village chief to death, their savagery is personal—and primitive. Ours is impersonal and sophisticated. We and the South Vietnamese soldiers use artillery to shell villages; and we don't see what happens at the other end when the shell explodes, killing and mutilating women and children. The same is true of our bombing and strafing. There is a comfortable barrier between the man who fires the bullets or releases the bombs and the suffering human beings on the ground. We keep our killing tidy."

The need could not be more urgent, nor the responsibility of Americans more apparent.

And so we are waiting no longer. Our license applications have been submitted and rejected. Our delegation has gone to Washington, as have many similar delegations gone before.

Thus we have signed the vouchers required for us to provide relief grants totalling $39,000.

● $13,000 is being divided evenly between Caritas Internationalis, the Vatican's relief organization, and the World Council of Churches; the funds will be used in connection with their coordinated medical assistance program in North Vietnam, where the equipment being shipped—X-ray gear, maternity wards, surgical tools—will be used to expand existing facilities and to create new ones.

● $13,000 is being used by the Danish Committee of Conscience on Vietnam, an interfaith organization, to purchase surgical equipment and medicines needed in areas of South Vietnam controlled by the National Liberation Front.

●$13,000 is being given to the Buddhist School of Youth for Social Service which, though based in Saigon, is providing emergency assistance, for casualties and refugees, throughout South Vietnam.

It is our prayer that others will join with us. $39,000 is a tiny sum, hardly a minute's worth of war. While it can relieve a little suffering, perhaps save a few lives, it is inconsequential so long as the war continues. We ask you to send what you can, either through our committee or a similar domestic agency, or to send it directly to such international agencies as are mentioned above. It is not enough to resist the war, to argue, vote and act against it. We must give to help in relieving the suffering of the Vietnamese people. We must do so in sorrow and mourning not only for the Vietnamese, but for our nation and our descendants.

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